

New emergency support line launched for vulnerable people needing urgent help

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Corporate message



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Today (Monday 30 March) Cumbria County Council and partners have launched a new emergency support service for people at high risk of becoming seriously ill, as a result of COVID-19, and who do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours.

Those at high risk include people over 70 years old, pregnant women and those with underlying health conditions who should be protecting themselves by staying at home. The majority of these people will already be receiving support from family, friends or local voluntary groups with tasks like shopping or collection of medicines if they require it. But we know that a small number of people will not have this support. If they have no alternative, these people will now be able to call the Freephone number to request help with getting food, medicines, essential supplies and home deliveries.

Cumbria County Council has been working closely with District Councils, Cumbria CVS, Cumbria Community Foundation, community and voluntary sector, private sector and military to establish these new arrangements. To support the new helpline every area is coordinating a supply of essential food, medicines and supplies which can only be accessed via the emergency helpline or email. The requests received asking for help will then be matched with local support and supplies being offered by community groups, volunteers, councils and businesses.

The Emergency telephone support line is 0800 783 1966.

Or you can email your request for help to COVID19support@cumbria.gov.uk.

Further details about this support service can be found online at cumbria.gov.uk.

The telephone 'call' centre will operate Monday to Friday 9.00am to 5pm and 10am to 2pm at weekends. The service will also accept referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community.

Cumbria is already seeing widespread community and voluntary sector support for the response to COVID-19 and informal support, including neighbourhood WhatsApp groups and community Facebook groups, alongside a commitment from existing community emergency planning groups, local churches and faith groups and formal voluntary sector organisations who are working with the county council and partners including District Councils and NHS.

Cllr Deborah Earl, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities, said:

“People who are self-isolating or shielding must not go out to get food shopping, many of these people have good support networks who they can rely on for the delivery of food, medicines or essential services and supplies. But for those who don’t we are launching the new emergency support helpline.

“We want to reassure the public that we are ready to provide support to our most vulnerable residents who may not have friends or family available to help them.”

Carolyn Otley, Cumbria CVS, Chair of Community Resilience Group:

“It is important to speak to others and ask them to help you to make arrangements for delivery of food, medicines and essential services and supplies, and look after your physical and mental health and wellbeing.

“It’s been reassuring to see there is already widespread community and voluntary sector support for the response to COVID-19 across Cumbria. We all must continue to work together to help those who are isolated or at high risk.”

The helpline will also accept referrals from members of the public who may be concerned about people in their community.

For up to date information on COVID-19 in your area, please go to cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/communities.asp.