

Dear Town and Parish Colleagues

I thought it would be helpful to send you an update on the plans at Wealden District Council in responding to the Covid-19 virus situation, particularly with regard to the support provided for vulnerable residents.

You received an email from Isabel Garden and Bob Standley last week outlining the Government's plans to set up a 'Hub and Shield'. This is a partnership approach between local and national agencies to support those in our communities who are at the highest risk of severe illness ('the clinically extremely vulnerable') if they contract COVID-19 and therefore have been advised to isolate themselves ("shielding") for a period of at least 12 weeks.

Work on this has been progressing over the last few days and more information can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

In brief, there are some 1.4 million people who will fall into this vulnerable group and they will be receiving letters from the NHS this week to confirm that they are considered to be at risk if they contract COVID-19.

Many of these people will have a support network of people around them who can help with shopping or collection of prescriptions which can be left at the front door. But there will be some who have no friends, family or other networks locally to do these things for them for all, or part, of their period in self-isolation

There is a three-fold offer to support those who are being shielded, but do not have a support network that they can rely on:

- Food: the Government is working with the food industry to deliver basic food parcels directly to their doorsteps, and over time will look at other ways to help.
- Medicines: community pharmacies will supply and organise delivery.
- Social contact: local authorities, working with the voluntary and community sector, will be asked to continue to care for those who might be feeling very isolated

The Government will prioritise those in the high-risk group who are unable to rely on family or friends for adequate practical support throughout the period of shielding. A basic package of food and household essentials will be provided, supplied and delivered by major food service suppliers with established national delivery infrastructure. This will take a little while before being fully operational but arrangements are being made to help those who may be in immediate urgent need.

Locally in East Sussex, support will be coordinated through the County Council, acting through the Local Resilience Forum.

For those residents who are not in the most vulnerable shielded group, but nonetheless may need help over the next few weeks, we have today (25 March) set up arrangements through our website www.wealden.gov.uk/ and Contact Centre (01323 443322) for people to either ask for help, or volunteer to provide help. We are working with colleagues across East Sussex and the voluntary sector to ensure we can direct people to local support when needed. We hope that most people will be able to use their own support networks but of course need to make sure measures in place for those that can't.

I know that many of you already have your own local arrangements in place and we are keeping a list of all of these so that we can signpost people to the nearest source of

support. If you haven't already let us know what arrangements you have in place please do tell us – email me alex.white@wealden.gov.uk or michelle.namurach@wealden.gov.uk

We will keep developing our plans and we will keep you informed.

Should residents want more information about Covid-19 or our services during this time, our website has a dedicated page which is regularly updated. The link is prominent on our homepage www.wealden.gov.uk/. Please also encourage residents to follow our twitter account (@wealdendistrict), like our Facebook page or sign up to MyAlerts for regular updates

Alexander White|

Wealden District Council

01323 443171 | 07985 878678

alex.white@wealden.gov.uk

Council Offices | Vicarage Lane | Hailsham | East Sussex | BN27 2AX

<http://www.wealden.gov.uk>

[@wealdenc](#) [@wealden](#) [@wealdenc](#)