

## Covid 19 briefing pack 16 April 2020

### Key information for West Suffolk businesses and communities

The response to the pandemic is rapid and there is an increasing amount of information. This briefing gives you the key messages on how West Suffolk Council is supporting residents, businesses and communities, as of 14 April 2020, and is also available at [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus)

#### 1. Communities

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/C19communities](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/C19communities)

**Home, but not alone.** Anyone who is vulnerable, at home and with no other support from family or friends available to them, can call the Home, But Not Alone **freephone 0800 876 6926** which is staffed from **9am to 5pm**, seven days a week.



West Suffolk Council staff provide a response to the calls from residents in its area and the aim is, where possible, to identify a solution in a local area, whether that's signposting to a shop that takes phone payments and delivers food, to matching people who are vulnerable with local community support to help with things like delivering groceries, medication or essential household goods, in line with Government social distancing guidelines.

West Suffolk Council asks community support groups in the area to email [families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk) so that they can help coordinate this.

**Tribe Volunteer** is a free app being used by Home, But Not Alone to help connect people who want to volunteer in their communities with neighbours who are most in need. The service will mean willing volunteers, charities, town and parish councils, community and religious groups can all log their details and offers of support on the free Tribe Volunteer app, which can be downloaded from [Apple App Store](#) and [Google Play Store](#).

The Home, But Not Alone service was created by partners from Suffolk's councils, police, health bodies and charitable organisations which come together as the [Collaborative Communities Board](#).

**Councillor locality budgets** - we have made additional funding available through our councillor locality budgets and changed some of the rules so that we can get swifter support to some of the community groups emerging to respond to the COVID19 crisis. You can contact your district councillor to discuss: [how to contact your councillor](#)

**Families and Communities Team** You can also contact our Families and Communities Team by emailing [families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk](mailto:families.communities@westsuffolk.gov.uk) who can also direct you to other funding sources and guidance.



**Community Action Suffolk** has a range of guides, toolkits, and useful information for community groups [Community Action Suffolk - COVID-19 Response - Communities](#). It includes advice on handling cash and safeguarding.

**Volunteer Shopper payments** - SALC has published guidance for volunteers and those in receipt of volunteer food deliveries on how best to arrange payment and how town and parish councils can help.  
[www.salc.org.uk/homepage/volunteershopperpayments](http://www.salc.org.uk/homepage/volunteershopperpayments)

**Sport England** has established an emergency fund to help community organisations involved in keeping people physically active meet their bills [Sport England has opened applications to a £20 million Community Emergency Fund](#)

**Help for charities with property.** The Government has confirmed that charities having premises with a rateable value of less than £51,000 will be eligible for a cash grants of £10,000 or £25,000 per property. This means many of our village halls and other community groups with their own property meeting the criteria will receive such a grant to support them through this time. West Suffolk Council is contacting eligible organisations and expects to award over £950,000 to groups in this sector as part of over £34m of grants payable to retail, hospitality and leisure sector.

**Community Chest Funds** have continued and the grants that we awarded in January have now been made to local voluntary groups.

**Suffolk Community Foundation** has established a Coronavirus Support Fund that is welcoming applications from across West Suffolk and awarding funding to those groups who are helping with the demand and resilience.

**Additional funding** has been made available to our foodbanks through Suffolk County Council with £60,000 being available to foodbanks across Suffolk via Suffolk Community Foundation. We are also working with our foodbanks to ensure they receive donations from Fare Share and support moving forward.

**Homelessness** If anyone is either homeless or at risk of becoming homeless imminently please call 01284 757178 (opening times Mon-Fri 8.45am-5pm); out of hours number 01284 763252. There's advice and guidance on our website: [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/find\\_a\\_home/homelessness.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/housing/find_a_home/homelessness.cfm)

**Council Tax and benefits.** For those unable to pay their Council Tax – West Suffolk Council locally administers the Government's new Hardship Fund, **automatically** reducing Council Tax bills for households already in receipt of means-tested Local Council Tax Support – ensuring the most financially vulnerable households will have nothing to pay in 2020/21.

Support is also available for residents who do not usually fall into this category but now need help. If their household income has reduced, then please encourage them to check [www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/westsuffolk](http://www.angliarevenues.gov.uk/westsuffolk) to see if we can help.

**Health and wellbeing** is central to managing the lockdown and the West Suffolk Life Link team have produced further support and guidance to wellbeing. This link is continually reviewed and will be updated by the team as additional support



is identified [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/lifelink/covid-19-information-and-wellbeing-guide.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/community/lifelink/covid-19-information-and-wellbeing-guide.cfm)

It includes signposting for those,

- at risk of **domestic violence** should phone [Anglia Care Trust](#) - 08009 775 690 or [Leeway Support](#) - 0300 561 0077
- in need of **drug or alcohol support**
- feeling **anxious or lonely**

We have been working hard to source urgent temporary accommodation for vulnerable groups who urgently need a place to stay in order to prevent them being homeless, to self-isolate, stay safe or recover following recent illness.

## 2. Businesses

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business)

West Suffolk Council has paid out over £19.5m so far to 1657 West Suffolk businesses eligible for the Small Business Grant Fund and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality grants. (Figures correct as of 15 April 2020.)

We have been working our way through the grants to the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality sector from 6 April, having prioritised their £34m of Business Rate Relief. Businesses that are eligible will receive grants of £10,000 or £25,000 depending on their rateable value.

We have been redeploying staff so we can prioritise making calls and emails to businesses about the grants. We have also been contacting businesses via social media where calls and emails have been unanswered. We will be processing payments daily as more forms are returned.

Businesses can check whether they are eligible for a grant and if they are, can completing an online form here [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19businessgrants.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid-19businessgrants.cfm)

We are continually updating our website, in to include forms that businesses can go online to complete. Keep an eye on our dedicated webpage at [www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/c19business) for updates on this and other business support.

**BE AWARE** We have been made aware of a company offering to assist you in getting your grant for a charge. **PLEASE DO NOT FALL FOR THIS.** Follow the advice on this webpage and on the council's social media channels.

## 3. Changes to services

[www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid19changestoservices.cfm](http://www.westsuffolk.gov.uk/coronavirus/covid19changestoservices.cfm)

West Suffolk Council is prioritising essential services and has redeployed staff to ensure this and to protect public health:

Bins and waste

- [Garden Waste Collection Service](#) suspended from Monday 30 March.



- [All Suffolk County Council recycling centres are closed.](#)
- Community recycling points – remain open but are being emptied less frequently. If the banks are full, please take your recycling home again. Do not leave it beside the banks. See [Recycling and recycling centres.](#)

#### Car parks

- [All West Suffolk run car parks will be free to park in until further notice.](#)

#### Markets

- [Markets](#) - Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket, Haverhill, Mildenhall, Brandon and Clare markets are closed until further notice. Several [market traders are offering delivery services.](#)

#### Parks and open spaces

- [Parks and open spaces](#) - **parks are being kept open** so people can use them responsibly to exercise once a day. **All playgrounds in our parks have been closed.**

#### Building closures

- [Public access to West Suffolk Council buildings is closed but services are still being delivered.](#)
- [The Apex is closed.](#)
- [West Suffolk leisure centres are closed until further notice.](#)
- [Moyse's Hall Museum and West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village are closed](#) until further notice. West Stow Country Park remains open.

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