

COVID-19 UPDATE – Tuesday 31 March 2020

Good evening

At this unprecedented time the need to support the vulnerable is at the forefront of everyone's minds.

Whilst things are very fluid and there is little sense of certainty, our staff, partnering organisations, councillors, town and parish councils and communities are working exceptionally hard to reach out and provide assistance to all those that need it.

Most of my updates today focus on specific support for the vulnerable - providing guidance and information on council-led initiatives plus those of government and partners which can sign-posted to people as appropriate:

Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub

The council has set up a dedicated hub to support the most vulnerable residents during the ongoing COVID-19 situation.

Over the weekend a group of our amazing community-minded colleagues volunteered to help by contacting over 840 of our most vulnerable residents. They checked in to see if they needed food boxes or essential supplies and the 107 people who did require urgent food parcels have all now received them.

The Wiltshire Wellbeing Hub is available to anyone who is struggling during this difficult time, such as people who are shielding or self-isolating and don't have a support network around them or know where to get help. Our team can help provide support but also signpost them to where additional help is available in their local area, via the hundreds of community groups set-up across the county providing invaluable assistance.

People can get in touch with the hub via email at wellbeinghub@wiltshire.gov.uk or by calling 0300 003 4576. It's available from 8am-8pm Monday-Friday and 10am-4pm Saturday and Sunday.

Support for victims of domestic abuse

Amid concerns that some people suffering from domestic abuse may

decide not to access support services or call Wiltshire Police during these challenging times, the council and police have joined together to send strong message of support via social media and news channels to victims 'we are here and ready to support you'.

Whilst some domestic abuse support services are not able to offer face-to-face meetings at this time, there is still help and advice available from national and local agencies both online and over the phone.

People living with domestic abuse, or those that know someone who is living with the impacts of domestic abuse can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline 0808 2000 247 which is freephone in partnership with Women's Aid and Refuge, or in an emergency call 999.

Charity [Splitz](#) also offers domestic abuse support services during the week, and can respond to people's concerns by emailing spa@splitz.org, or calling 01225 775276.

Splitz also has a range of advice including:

- [Keeping safe](#)
- [Support available in Wiltshire](#)
- [Talk toolkits](#)

Please kindly share this information with your community.

Support for mental and physical wellbeing

The Government has today published the following Guidance for the public on the mental health and wellbeing aspects of COVID-19 ([available online](#)).

The guidance covers a number of topics and provides links to useful resources and web pages to promote mental and physical wellbeing including [Every Mind Matters](#), the [NHS' mindfulness page](#) Public Health England's [10 minute work outs](#) and [NHS Fitness Studio](#).

A number of topics are covered, including;

- Helping to connect with others
- Helping and supporting others
- Talking about worries
- Look after physical wellbeing
- Looking after your sleep
- Managing difficult feelings

The council is supporting the national drive to promote positive physical and mental wellbeing by sharing information and rolling out a range of online activities for members of the community. Services

such as libraries, heritage, arts and leisure are working together to support people as much as possible.

Council support for people to stay active

The council's leisure centre teams are promoting fitness challenges and videos across all 10 of their Facebook pages, which will include activities for all abilities and signposting to national resources such as Sports England's #StayInWorkOut Campaign ([click here](#)).

The council's leisure service is also developing a regular member newsletter to keep their members in the loop on updates as well as sharing ideas, video links and content to support them to be as active and maintain a healthy lifestyle as much as possible while staying home. When issued this will be made publicly available at www.wiltshire.gov.uk/leisure-memberships and via the COVID-19 page on our website <http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus>

Council's library service provides Facebook rhyme time

Over the coming weeks, library staff across the county will lead rhyme times and story times to children via Facebook. Despite everyone having to stay home, we're pleased we can still provide our much-loved rhyme time and we hope that providing a little familiarity will help families as they get used to their 'new normal'.

The library service's first online rhyme time which was broadcast last Friday (27 March) has been viewed more than 3,000 times and received hundreds of positive comments.

All sessions will be available to view afterwards on the libraries' Facebook pages.

To view a replay of the Trowbridge rhyme time session people should visit https://en-gb.facebook.com/pg/TrowbridgeLibrary/posts/?ref=page_internal.

The next confirmed online sessions due to take place are:

- Wednesday 1 April, 11am – from Corsham Library Facebook page
- Thursday 2 April, 11am – from Salisbury Library Facebook

- page
- Friday 3 April, 10am – from Trowbridge Library Facebook page

People should follow @WiltsLibraries and @WiltsCouncil on Twitter for the latest updates.

Volunteer Information Pack and Community Groups Directory

As you know, the council's '**COVID-19 Volunteer Pack**' ([click here](#)) has been published and promoted widely across council and partner channels. Many groups have shared their way of working with us and this pack brings together a lot of their best practise in setting up an effective response, including advice on supporting those in self-isolation.

This pack can be used in conjunction with the '**Community Groups Directory**' ([click here](#)), which lists all the volunteer groups the council has been informed are providing support in their community. This directory will be updated as much as possible.

Latest service update – Garden waste

As you are aware, the council would normally be contacting residents at this time of year about renewing their subscriptions for the chargeable garden waste collection service.

Due to the pressure on the council's services because of coronavirus (COVID-19), the decision has been taken that this process should be delayed. The subscription renewal period will now not commence until 15 June this year.

Collections of garden waste will continue, provided the council's contractor has sufficient staff to maintain service delivery given the risk of absence as some staff have to self-isolate. All current subscribers to the garden waste service will receive a letter or email to update them of this change within the next few days.

Thank you for your continued support

Regards

CLlr Philip Whitehead