



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: 19th September 2018

Subject: Community First's member support to include free legal helpline

From 1st October 2018, Community First will provide access to a free legal helpline for a trial period. This offer is part of the wider support and advice service that Community First, a support and development organisation for Hampshire's charity and voluntary sector, already provides to its member organisations.

Hampshire Legal Services (HLS), the in-house legal practice of Hampshire County Council, are partnering with Community First to provide the legal advice for the helpline. HLS's team of over 70 specialist lawyers have traditionally supported the County Council by providing the legal support it needs to deliver public services in Hampshire. Increasingly, HLS is working in partnership with a growing number of public and third sector organisations that deliver public services. Community First welcome the opportunity to work with HLS. Tim Houghton, CEO of Community First, said: "Community First is delighted to be able to be working in partnership with Hampshire Legal Services to offer an additional option for our members to access appropriate legal support. Legal problems can be time consuming and expensive for charitable organisations, but problems can often be avoided if help is sought at an early stage. We hope this helpline will enable members of Community First to access timely, free advice when they need it."

The offer of a legal helpline is just the latest addition to Community First's growing body of online resources for charities and not-for-profit organisations. Through their dedicated Community Development team, Community First are committed to providing their members with specialist information and support. This commonly includes fundraising, finance, governance, project planning, and policies. Accessing these services help organisations not only to maintain daily operations, but also to grow and to become eligible for additional sources of funding.

Any interested parties can learn more and access the service online at <https://www.cfirfirst.org.uk>. Membership of Community First is free for charities, not-for-profit organisations, social enterprises, and community groups operating in Hampshire. Organisations can register for membership online at <https://www.cfirfirst.org.uk/membership>. Any other enquiries about the service should go to Mandy Harris by calling 0300 500 8085 or by sending an e-mail to mandy.harris@cfirfirst.org.uk.

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Community First is the trading name of Communities First Wessex

Registered Charity no 1147527 Company Registered in England and Wales 8071971 at
Langstone Technology Park Langstone Road Havant Hampshire PO9 1SA



Notes for Editors

1. Communities First Wessex (known as Community First) provides support and advice to local voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises in order to build their capacity and ensure a thriving and successful voluntary sector across East Hampshire, Fareham, Havant and Winchester. We also provide a one stop shop for all aspects of volunteering; helping recruit and place volunteers throughout our local communities and providing specialist training for voluntary organisations.
2. Communities First Wessex also delivers critical community services including:
 - a. Community Transport and Dial a Ride in East Hampshire, Fareham, Gosport, Havant, Winchester and Basingstoke
 - b. Shopmobility in Fareham, Havant and Chichester, and Winchester
 - c. Health and wellbeing services including surgery signposting with GP surgeries in Bordon, Fareham and Waterlooville, a Silver Linings programme for older people at Hewitt's in Emsworth, Walking 4 Health in Fareham, and a Home Help and a Gardening Service for vulnerable people in Fareham.
 - d. Support for Community Buildings and managing agents for Leigh Park Community Centre in Havant
 - e. Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling services
 - f. Specialist youth work including support for young people's mental health
 - g. Work and skills based training and support for unemployed people
 - h. Supported volunteering for people with a range of needs including mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, and those with a physical or mild learning disability.
3. Communities First Wessex employs 116 staff, has more than 80 regular volunteers and has a turnover of £2.6m. Its main sources of income are local authority and government grants and contracts, Big Lottery Fund and a range of charitable trusts.
4. For further information contact:
Tim Houghton, Chief Executive, Communities First Wessex
07467 941018 or email tim.houghton@cfirst.org.uk

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