

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 20th March 2020

Subject: Local Charity Coordinates Volunteer & Community Response to Covid-19

Community First is working with key agencies to coordinate the volunteer and community response to the current Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. Working across Hampshire, Community First is working with districts with three clear aims:

- If you require support and advice in this crisis please - email us at support@cfirst.org.uk. We are continuing some of our own services such as Transport, Shopmobility & Wellbeing Service and we will endeavour to put you in contact with your local Community Support.
- Do you want to volunteer? Go to www.volunteerwessex.org. to register your interest
- We are here to support our members. If you have any questions, contact us. We'll be updating twice weekly. Go to www.cfirst.org.uk/community-first-eneews/ to get on our mailing list or email support@cfirst.org.uk

Tim Houghton, Community First's CEO, says "We are working with a wide range of agencies and groups to ensure that elderly and vulnerable members of our communities are supported at this difficult time. If you are worried about a neighbour, friend or isolated relative we can signpost you to the local community support that's available'.

Across our communities we have an army of volunteers coming forward to help those most in need. We want to build on this social action and provide people with the tools to carry on this essential role. If you are coordinating a team of volunteers and would like to offer support please contact us via our website www.cfirst.org.uk and a member of our rapid response team will be in contact with you.

- End -

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, 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

If Tim Houghton is unavailable contact:

Hywel Small, Head of Enterprise
07467 941003 or email hywel.small@cfirst.org.uk

Or

Janet Duggan, Business & Volunteering Engagement Manager
07467 941013 or email janet.duggan@cfirst.org.uk

