

Update on Corona Virus from County Councillor Mike Fox-Davies 30-3-20

Before I start this report I must applaud the work done by the volunteer groups working in the parishes, towns and cities throughout the County and beyond, who have sprung into action during this emergency to ensure the elderly and vulnerable are not alone and are receiving assistance when needed. I recently attended the start up meeting of the Harwell Parish Helpers and was very impressed by their enthusiasm and dedication. All our volunteers are much deserving of our praise and appreciation and if you feel you can give even a small amount of support to your local volunteer group, please do.

These are unprecedented times; we all need to take care and follow the latest Government advice. Staff at the County Council are working flat out as we cannot simply close down or ask everybody to work from home, we are there to support and protect Oxfordshire's residents particularly the vulnerable. We are prioritising our work and where possible staff are working from home. There are some areas that will see an increase in demand at a time when some of our staff will become ill with the virus. There will be some changes as we have to prioritise our work to key areas.

The main area of work in Social Care both adult and children's has to continue on a 24/7 basis protecting around 7,000 residents. We expect the number of people requiring care to increase as informal carers become ill and are unable to continue care. This work is vital as it's important we keep as many people as possible out of hospital.

We are working closely with the NHS to provide care and facilities for those patients that do not require acute care to be cared for away from hospitals or at home freeing up beds for those that most need them. This includes the group that we need to shield from the virus who are thought to be most at risk across the county.

The Government are shielding the extremely vulnerable approx. 1.5 million across the country full details can be found on the website: Extremely vulnerable.

Currently those people identified by the NHS as extremely vulnerable will be contacted by the NHS by letter, email, text or all 3 to say that they need to isolate themselves at home for the next 12 weeks. They will be asked if they have any help to collect prescriptions and food, this may be supplied by one of the brilliant local groups that have been set up. If they don't have any help then they will be told to contact the council who will arrange a contact which again may come from one of the local groups. As you will see from the document these are certain groups within the population but there may be others that need help such as those in self-isolation which is where all the volunteers will help. If somebody thinks they should be on the list and haven't been contacted by Sunday 29th March, then they should contact their GP or hospital clinician.

To assist in the logistics across the country there are Local Resilience Forums, we are in the Thames Valley Based around the Police authority area. These are where the blue light services link in with the NHS and local authorities to consider the high-level strategy. These then delegate down to the County to work with WODC and other Districts to coordinate the local hubs. The Government have seconded military planners to assist in the hubs which is where all the local community groups come into the local networks. This is about all working together to ensure that we do not duplicate provision or even worse miss a vulnerable resident

The organic growth of the community networks or hubs that we are seeing being set up is fantastic. These groups are providing some excellent services to local residents who are self-isolating or do not have relatives locally. It's important that they are community led but we need to avoid duplication, so the County Council and Districts are working with Oxfordshire Volunteers to list them all and provide support where needed.

If you are approached by people wishing to volunteer, they can register at:
<https://oxonvolunteers.org/vk/volunteers/index.htm>

Unfortunately, there are some cases of people taking advantage of the vulnerable residents so Trading Standards are working with the Police monitoring the situation and will take action should there be a need. Should you be aware of anything please do not hesitate to contact me.

This is a very fast-moving situation so please use the OCC, NHS and Government websites for the latest information.

I would like to say a big thank you to all the residents who continue to work to help us get through this difficult time.

I will send any updates as they become available.

Above all please take care, stay safe and follow the advice.

TOGETHER WE WILL BEAT THIS!

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