



Wednesday 1 April 2020

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A message from our Chief Executive and Leader



As we all adjust to the changes in the way we live our lives because of coronavirus (COVID-19), colleagues from all Devon County Council services are working round the clock to make sure you continue to receive vital services.

We are immensely proud of the dedication and calm, professional response from all our staff. Many are able to work from home supporting the delivery of services, while many others are working within our communities to provide care.

All our staff are essential workers who are doing the very best they can in incredibly difficult circumstances, while caring for their own loved ones, and we know you will treat them with respect and understanding.

This is a situation that none of us ever thought we would be facing, but we are all in this together. We will continue to do everything we can to support you all by keeping our social care system working, protecting the most vulnerable and helping Devon's economy to recover.

Take care and stay safe.

Phil Norrey, Devon County Council Chief Executive
Cllr John Hart, Leader of Devon County Council

Please note that all of our sites and offices are closed to the public, except for necessary prearranged visits, but you can still [contact us if you need to.](#)

In this update:

- Act like you've got it - latest advice from the NHS
 - We need you - get a job in health and social care
 - Over 300 community groups listed on our website!
 - Warning about loan sharks
 - Grants and funding support information
 - Keeping Devon well informed and how you can help
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Latest

Coronavirus is no joke!



The first day of this month is traditionally April Fool's Day, a time for pranks and high-jinks. But the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is no joke.

Anyone can get it. Anyone can spread it. So please, stay home, protect the NHS and save lives. Only going out for the following reasons:

- To buy food or medicine
- To attend health appointments
- To take exercise
- or for essential work that cannot be done at home.

If you must go out, make sure you stay two metres (6ft) away from other people and wash your hands as soon as you get

home.

[Full guidance from the government on staying at home and away from others.](#)

Keeping people safe and well

Devon needs you: get a job in health and social care



We're encouraging job seekers, students back from university, college leavers and former care and health staff to help support the county's most vulnerable.

The coronavirus outbreak (COVID-19) means there's an even greater demand for Healthcare Assistants in residential homes, people's own homes and hospitals in Devon so temporary and permanent workers are needed to fill a variety of shift work.

You don't necessarily need qualifications or previous work experience. What's important are your values and attitude towards working with people who need care, and your ability to cope in challenging environments.

[Find out more, including how to register, on the Proud To Care website.](#)

Avoid loan sharks



People worrying about money or struggling financially due to the ongoing situation with coronavirus (COVID-19) are being [urged to avoid loan sharks](#).

Loan sharks are unregulated, often give cash loans without any paperwork and charge extortionate interest rates, which can be difficult to repay. Victims believe the loan shark is offering them a service, but their behaviour can quickly change if repayments are not met.

If you are concerned about your financial situation and need support, [Citizens Advice has some useful information on their website](#).

[The Government has published helpful advice](#) if you are self-employed, claiming benefits or needing to make a claim for benefits and statutory sick pay. You can also find more details about [statutory sick pay](#) and about [making a new claim for universal credit](#) online.

Scams have increased during the coronavirus outbreak – up by 400% - so [please be aware and be careful](#) if you are asked to give out personal or financial information.

Curl up with a good book... online



Devon Libraries has expanded their range of eBooks, eAudiobooks, eMagazines and online resources in their Digital Library in order to ensure that they are widely available during school and library closures. There is also a wide range of children's eBooks and eAudiobooks available.

For more information about how to sign-up, download and stream the digital resources, visit the [Devon Libraries catalogue](#).

Community

More funding available to support community action



We're giving more to support to local organisations helping to tackle the effects of coronavirus in their communities, by introducing a new grant of up to £5,000 as part of the COVID-19 Prompt Action Fund. There are now two separate grants available from the council through the fund; one of less than £500, which launched last week, and the new grant of up to £5,000. [Find out more, including how to apply.](#)

Information about grant and funding support

In addition to the grants that we are making available, there are other grants for care workers, community organisations, businesses and individuals, charities, hospitality industry, sports sector, and grants for the arts industry. We've brought information about [all of them together on our coronavirus webpages.](#)

Over 300 community groups listed - find your nearest



We launched [a new interactive map](#) earlier this week to show you where your nearest local community group is, that can help if you need support during this period of self-isolation and staying in. We're adding to the list every day as soon as we hear about more. We've now got more than 300 community groups listed. Find out which groups are operating near you, and if you need support please let them know.

To add a local group that is missing, please [pass your details to us using this form.](#)

There's advice for setting up local support groups, including getting in touch with your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS), [on our website.](#)

How to volunteer and help safely

Many of you have been volunteering to offer practical, emotional and social support to your neighbours, communities and the NHS, which is excellent, but you need to do so safely. The Government has [published guidance on how to help safely](#)

Service updates

Breaking news!



We've pulled together all of our social media messaging and news stories about coronavirus (COVID-19) into one place. We thought it'd be [easier for you to find](#) that way, keeping you up to date each day.

Help us to keep Devon well informed



Things are changing on a daily basis, but we are working to keep you informed through this email update and the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pages on our website](#), which have all our latest information, and links to the Government, the NHS and our community.

Please forward this email to anyone you think would find it useful and encourage them to sign up.

You can also share this update on social media and in any online groups you're part of by using this link - Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page](#). - to view it as a webpage and copy and paste the web address.

Stay connected - find out what's going on near you



We started this ConnectMe coronavirus update and [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pages on our website](#) to bring to you the latest news and information from us and around us to help you during this difficult time. We hope that you find it helpful.

Our other local government colleagues in Devon also have dedicated webpages and produce updates about their services during this period that you can receive straight to your computers, tablets and mobiles. Chose what local authority area you live in to subscribe to or read their latest updates: [East Devon District Council](#); [Mid Devon District Council](#); [North Devon Council](#); [Torridge District Council](#); [South Hams District Council](#); [West Devon Borough Council](#); [Teignbridge District Council](#); [Exeter City Council](#); [Plymouth City Council](#); and [Torbay Council](#).

Council chief praises the dedication of Team Devon

Our Leader, Councillor John Hart, has praised the dedication of hundreds of council workers in Devon who are, according to him, operating as another emergency service during the coronavirus crisis. You can find out what he said [on our news website.](#)

Latest school opening details for Easter 2020



A [list of schools and other providers](#) who are supporting children of critical workers who are on roll is on our website. If your child's school is not open, other schools in the area will do their best to support critical workers, but this must be by prior arrangement.

Making our information accessible

Information about coronavirus is available in different languages and formats including Easy Read from [Learning Disability Devon](#) and British Sign Language (BSL) from [Sign Health](#). BSL users can contact Devon County Council using the [InterpretersLive service](#). If you need information in another language or format please let us know by email via customer@devon.gov.uk or phone 0345 155 1015 or SMS text (text 'Devon' then your message to 80011)



The latest national advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) is available on the [Government website](#) and [NHS website](#).

You can find local guidance and information about the impacts on our services on the [Devon County Council website](#).



You have received this message because you have previously subscribed to receive news and information about Devon County Council's services.