

DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL
UPDATE 30TH MARCH



Monday 30 March 2020

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We've been busy over the weekend to ensure our response to coronavirus (COVID-19) continues at pace. All our staff and colleagues across partner organisations are working hard to make sure we are doing the very best to keep the people of Devon safe, healthy and connected during these difficult times.

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

Please note that all of our sites and offices are closed to the public, except for necessary prearranged visits

In this update:

- Latest school opening details for Easter
 - New transport scheme trialled for key workers
 - New interactive map of community support groups
 - Advice for carers
 - Alternative accommodation identified to help the NHS
 - Be aware of coronavirus scams
 - Virtual career fair
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Latest

New transport scheme trialled for key workers



We're trialling a [new on-demand subsidised taxi service](#) to help key workers facing difficulty getting to and from work because of reductions in public transport during the coronavirus outbreak. Many key workers that rely on public transport still need to get to work and we hope this pilot service will help make it as easy as possible for them to

continue with their vital roles at this difficult time.

Councils identify alternative accommodation to help the NHS

Councils are identifying accommodation that could, if required, be [turned into temporary care facilities](#) for people when they're ready to leave hospital, to relieve pressure on the NHS. The accommodation could also be used to temporarily house additional staff being recruited into healthcare, or staff being redeployed to front line care roles.



Virtual career fair

Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership have [launched a virtual career fair for those affected by the coronavirus outbreak](#). It includes information about current vacancies, advice on self-employment and support for business.

Keeping people safe and well

What to do if you provide support to a family member



How would you cope if your relative's care worker is unable to visit them? [Have you got a plan in place](#) which includes extra provisions and enough medication to cover any delays? Devon Carers provides a range of support to carers and are developing an emergency planning guide to help carers work out the answers.

Be aware of scams

Devon, Somerset and Torbay Trading Standards Service has issued a warning to local residents and businesses to [be aware of fraudsters](#) who are trying to exploit fear and uncertainty surrounding coronavirus (COVID-19).



The outbreak of coronavirus has seen an increase in scams that include counterfeit medical kits that claim to prevent or cure the disease and fake online coronavirus resources which can contain damaging software.

Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp



The Government has launched its [Coronavirus Information Service on WhatsApp](#). The free service is an automated 'chatbot' that will provide information on coronavirus prevention and symptoms, the latest number of cases in the UK, advice on staying at home, travel advice and myth busting. More information can be found on the [Government website](#).

Community

Interactive map to help you find your nearest community group



We've [updated the Community Support page of our website](#). We have an interactive map to help you find community groups operating near you that are offering help to residents who need it. We also have advice for setting up local support groups, including getting in touch with your local Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and letting us know so we can point people to you.

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](#)

Funding to support community action

We've launched the COVID-19 Prompt Action Fund to help provide valuable funding to organisations working in communities that have been affected by the coronavirus outbreak. [Find out more, including how to apply.](#)

Service updates

Daily exercise and travel

Usually we'd be delighted to encourage you to use our public rights of way, walking and cycling trails around Devon. [But now we ask you to use them sensibly](#), as part of the exercise that we're allowed each day. Respect social distancing guidance, don't use them in groups, and please don't travel a distance in order to use them, because travel to exercise is not essential travel.



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.

Council meetings

A number of our routine council meetings with non-urgent business have been cancelled while we wait for further guidance from the Government on the ability of the Council to continue its democratic processes and the potential for holding meetings remotely, which currently the law does not permit.

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)

And finally...

Apologies, the link we included in our last update didn't work for some people, so [we've updated it](#) and now hopefully you can all enjoy this lovely video.

Thousands of people opened their front doors at 8pm on Thursday 26 March to show in solidarity their support for our nation's health workers. Streets rang to the sound of applause. Neighbours and friends shared the moment, respecting a safe distance from each other. [We've captured a few moments of it.](#)



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](#).



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