

Community Shield – getting food and supplies to our most vulnerable



People across Essex are doing an amazing job supporting their family, friends and neighbours who are at the most risk from coronavirus because they are older, vulnerable and have health conditions.

From now, public services across Essex are stepping up support for people who may not have help from their nearest and dearest.

Cllr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said: “The way Essex has rallied around the vulnerable across the County has been incredible and I would like to thank each and every person who is helping friends, neighbours and relatives stay home and stay safe. You are literally saving lives across our great County because you are protecting our NHS.

“Now Councils, the NHS and all our public and voluntary sector partners are stepping up to try and make sure no-one who needs help is missed out. It has been a huge effort, involving round-the-clock work. I am very proud of what is being put into place to shield our most vulnerable residents.”

We are supporting the national effort to get food and supplies to the County’s most vulnerable residents.

The Essex Resilience Forum (ERF) made up of all the county public sector organisations, is tasked with ensuring that people with the most serious health conditions across – Essex, Southend and Thurrock - are shielded from social contact for 12 weeks during the peak of the epidemic. These people have been contacted already by the NHS and offered food package deliveries.

A distribution hub has been set up in Witham (central Essex), with two other hubs set up by Southend and Thurrock Councils. From this weekend, food deliveries to hubs will begin to be dispatched to the most vulnerable residents.

Given the importance of social distancing and the most at risk being able to stay in their homes, ERF members and the voluntary sector are also mobilising resources across the county to provide assistance to a larger group. These are residents who are also vulnerable during the peak of the epidemic, and include residents over the age of 70 or pregnant women, and who do not have the support of friends, family or neighbours.

These residents will be contacted by the NHS or their GP surgeries, starting from 30 March.

The message will set out the instructions for those people who do not have the support of friends, families and neighbours to register with the Essex Welfare Service (EWS), part of PROVIDE (a health and social care provider), should they need food deliveries.

They will be able to contact the EWS via their [website](#) and phone on 0300 303 9988 (Mon-Fri 8am-7pm and Sat-Sun 10am-2pm)

We recognise not all of residents identified will need support, and many will have organised their own arrangements already. However, Community Shield’s aim is to ensure that no-one slips through the net. If you need support and have not received a message, please contact the EWS directly.

Councils across the county are working with supermarkets, delivery companies and other organisations on developing supply lines to people.

District Councils will also use their local hubs, which have been established in every district/borough/city council area, and using volunteer support.

Updates will be posted on the [Essex County Council website](#) and via social media.