

City of London Corporation

Member Briefing - Support for Residents

This document provides an overview of the City's response to COVID19 in support of its residents as of 7 May 2020 and covers the following areas:

- Support for vulnerable and shielded residents
- Residents experiencing financial hardship
- Resident Communications
- Rough Sleepers
- Schools, Education & Early Years Services
- Bereavement Support
- Additional Resources

This document has also been provided alongside a briefing update from the Community & Children's Services Committee meeting held on 24 April 2020. This note provides greater detail on: Support for Vulnerable Residents; Adult and Children Social Care; Homelessness and Rough Sleeping; Barbican & Community Libraries; Housing Management; Education and Public Health.

Support for vulnerable and shielded residents

We continue to provide social care services to adult with support needs in our community.

Some will benefit from care and support in their homes provided by commissioned services. The City Corporation has commissioned additional capacity for its Homecare providers to deliver extra assistance and to support additional discharges from hospital. We are monitoring our commissioned providers to ensure they have continued capacity and contingency plans in place.

The City Corporation is utilising local groups and networks to provide support with issues such as shopping and prescription collection. We are using voluntary sector partners and redeployed staff to provide social contact to those who may or may not receive the help of social services, but who may be older or in need of help, and who are isolating themselves in line with advice.

The government has identified those in our community who should be "shielded" due to their extreme vulnerability to the coronavirus. We contacted everyone on the shielded list to offer support with food, shopping, medicine collection and social contact. We have also contacted those known to social care and other services, those who use telecare support, residents on our estate that housing managers identify as vulnerable and those that self refer. We have been alerted to shielded residents by the health service in three tranches- most recently a further 45 people on Wednesday 22 April bringing the total to 154. We have managed to contact or account for all but one, who it appears was never resident in the City.

We have a dedicated email address (col-covid-19@cityoflondon.gov.uk) and phoneline (**020 7606 3030**) for people to self-refer, and we are encouraging and working with a network of local volunteers to identify others in need. We have spoken to all those who contacted us or have been referred to us through our dedicated webform, email address or telephone number.

For a more detailed briefing from the Community & Children's Services Committee, please contact covid19members@cityoflondon.gov.uk, who can provide this on request.

Residents experiencing financial hardship

Emergency legislation will be taken forward as an urgent priority so that landlords – including social landlords such as the City of London Corporation - will not be able to start proceedings to evict tenants for at least a three-month period due to non-payment of rent. As a result of these measures, no renters in private or social accommodation needs to be concerned about the threat of eviction.

Our Council Tax page offers advice for anyone in financial difficulty because of COVID-19 and who may also be eligible for the government's Council Tax hardship fund (www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/covid19counciltax or call us on 020 7332 1882).

Additional resources are being put into our existing emergency fund scheme (<http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/housing/financial-help-benefits/Pages/emergency-support-scheme.aspx>) and we will be taking action to increase awareness of this help.

Some residents in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit may be entitled to claim [discretionary housing payments](#). Further advice on what Government provision is in place for those in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit can be found on our website.

Residents based in the City may be able to use the [free Wi-Fi service](#). However, it should be noted that **the City Wi-Fi network has been designed for outdoor use and it may not be accessible in homes.**

We have increased support to other schemes helping those that might experience hardship. We have made available funding to support emergency food vouchers, and we are also in the process of allocating additional funds to ensure local foodbank support is resilient to any increase in demand.

We are advising that anyone experiencing hardship to contact City Advice as a first step. The City Advice service is free, confidential and impartial and can support people to claim the benefits and get the help available to them. They can also support applications to the City Corporation's Emergency Support Scheme and access immediate emergency help.

Anyone experiencing financial hardship should contact City Advice for a free, impartial and confidential service:

- call **City Advice** from Monday – Friday 9am-5pm on **020 7392 2919**
- email [City Advice](#)

How are we communicating to residents?

The City Corporation is using a range of channels to provide advice and support to residents – this includes through its website, social media and estate-based communications and advertising a contact phone number.

A hard-copy letter from the Lord Mayor and Chair of Policy is now also due to arrive with residents this week. This letter provides residents with key contact details (both web-based and telephone). The letter also includes notification of a new weekly

email newsletter to which residents can subscribe and which brings together the latest advice and news, and also offers ways to keep yourself active both mentally and physically. Residents should email details to covidbulletin@cityoflondon.gov.uk and we will add you to our subscriber list. This is also promoted on the COVID-19 webpage.

A recent edition of City Resident was issued and landed with residents on 17 April 2020. In addition to this, a poster designed with key contact details for residents is to be circulated across ward noticeboards, estates and local shops.

We are also directly contacting those identified as most vulnerable in our community to identify any unmet need for medicines, essential food or social contact.

Contacts we receive by telephone or email are logged and triaged for response. Responses include referral to appropriate local volunteers support, signposting to existing support and information services or referral to specialist services such as Adult Social Care. Requests are being forwarded to named volunteer leads in three key localities – Middlesex/Mansell Street, Barbican and Golden Lane.

The best thing that Members can do is signpost residents to the NHS and Public Health England website for the latest advice and updates. We have also updated our own website with a link to the relevant information on Government webpages.

If you are already part of a local residents group, faith group, neighbourhood watch, gardening club or house group, we ask that you initiate discussions (via phone, WhatsApp or email) about what hyper-local support the group could safely offer.

The City has a very active and strong community. Offers of support from volunteers, voluntary sector organisations, the government's NHS volunteers and others have exceeded requests for help to date. However, we anticipate need growing as the current situation continues, and the strength of our community offer will ensure we remain resilient.

Rough Sleepers

The City Corporation's commissioned outreach services continues to operate shifts throughout the week - and we will do all we can to provide support to the service and their workforce, who are already demonstrating outstanding commitment.

Since 1 March 2020 we have supported 72 people into accommodation.

We are working closely with our commissioned services to ensure support for those sleeping rough and whilst we have had reasonable success in persuading people to come off the street we still have a significant number of entrenched rough sleepers who have not come in. There were 27 people counted on the streets in a recent audit. The Department for Community and Children's Services is working closely with partnership organisations and neighbouring boroughs to get these remaining rough sleepers off the streets as soon as possible.

We have recently secured a 20-bed occupancy at the City Youth Hostel. It will be for 14 weeks – It will be staffed 24/7 plus security 24/7.

We are continuing to operate outreach services – including primary care outreach – to identify and support those on the streets.

Staff in both the outreach team and the assessment service have been directed to follow Public health England guidelines around social distancing and the use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

Both services are delivered by commissioned organisations with well developed procedures and policies to support staff safety and wellbeing.

For a more detailed briefing from the Community & Children's Services Committee, please contact covid19members@cityoflondon.gov.uk, who can provide this on request.

Schools, Education & Early Years Services

Sir John Cass's Foundation Primary School and the Cass Child & Family Centre are open each day to all of our vulnerable children, this includes children known to children's social care and those children with education, health & care plans. The school is also open for children of key workers. They are the Primary Education Hub for the City local area. They have been providing packed lunches to all children entitled to a free school meal attending the school. As of 20 April, they are providing food vouchers as part of the national free school meals voucher scheme. The school is also supporting the City Emergency Support Scheme as a pickup point for vouchers.

City of London Boys school is operating as the Secondary Education hub.

The Education & Early Years' service team are also continuing to work with childcare providers locally to provide childcare places for critical workers. Information is available on the [Family, Youth Information website \(FYI\)](#).

The City Education Psychology service has also developed information that provides support to education settings when a member of staff or child/young person dies or is affected by the death of a loved one. The information provides advice on strategies to manage and support children and young people experiencing grief and bereavement (<https://fyi.cityoflondon.gov.uk/kb5/cityoflondon/fyi/advice.page?id=JAJTgg-G9A>)

The team have also recently provided the primary school place offers for school places in September 2020.

All children with education, health and care plans are being supported by the Education & Early years' service team. We are in regular contact with the children and families and are also working with the special schools attended by City children to ensure that they are able to access learning while schools are closed, and continue to provide support to those that are able to attend school. Detail shared at the Community & Children's Services Committee Briefing from 24 April 2020.

In keeping with DfE guidance we continue to check with schools that pupils from the City of London have appropriate access to online learning and provide bespoke support where this is required. Following the announcement by the Secretary of State for Education on Sunday 19 April, laptops and tablets will be made available to help the most disadvantaged young people access online learning and social care services. We have updated our guidance for school and colleges on how to order internet access and digital devices and access support to provide remote education during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Bereavement Support

The death of a loved one at any time can be a challenging and distressing experience for family and friends. In the event of a sudden and unexpected loss due to Covid-19, the impact of the loss can be even greater. Anyone experiencing loss, through Covid-19 or another cause, may experience increased trauma and be cut off from their usual support network. Know that you're not alone.

Guidance, advice and support to deal with bereavement during this pandemic is available and is accessible via the webpage:

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/Pages/bereavement-support.aspx>

City residents can access free support for bereavement through St Joseph's Hospice (commissioned by City and Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group). Email the Hospice via the [First Contact Team](#) or call 0300 303 0400 for referrals and 24/7 advice and support.

Please see the Schools Education & Early Years section for information specifically on the support available to children and young people experiencing grief and bereavement.

Additional Resources Available to Residents

Additional information for residents on the following areas is available via the dedicated City of London Resident's Advice Page -

<https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/services/health-and-wellbeing/Pages/covid-19.aspx>

- Schools and other educational settings
- Libraries in the City
- Help with your health and wellbeing (including information on Domestic Abuse)
- If you wish to support COVID-19 relief efforts
- City Advice
- Latest Government Advice
- Potential COVID-19 related scams

The website also provides directions on how to translate the page content.

Contact Telephone for isolated residents in need of help: 020 7606 3030

Useful links

[COVID-19: latest information and advice](#)

[COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

[Public Health England guidance for Employers and Business](#)

PHE guidance on [self-isolation](#)

[COVID-19: What is self-isolation and why is it important?](#)

[Self-isolation advice](#)

[NHS 111 telephone service or online assessment.](#)

Employee Assistance Programme: 0800 0305 182 (This is also open to Members as well as staff)

[Information about contact tracing](#)

If I have any further queries, comments or suggestions, who do I contact?

Please contact Covid19Members@cityoflondon.gov.uk.