

# Introducing Community Shield

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.”

Essex County Council is supporting the national effort to get food and supplies to the County's most vulnerable residents.

## How will it work

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 written to directly by the Government and told to expect food packages to be delivered to them.

A distribution hub has been set up by Essex County Council in Witham in central Essex, with two other hubs set up by Southend and Thurrock Councils. From this weekend, food packages will begin to be dispatched to 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 includes people over the age of 70 or pregnant women, who do not have the support of friends, family or neighbours.

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 and city council area, using volunteer support.

## How will they be contacted

These residents will be contacted by the NHS, or their GP surgeries, starting from early next week, week commencing Monday 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 [essexwelfareservice.org](https://essexwelfareservice.org) and by calling 0300 303 9988, Monday to Friday between 8am to 7pm, and Saturday to Sunday between 10am to 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.

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## More information

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

Please [sign up to volunteer in your local area](#).

The latest advice on coronavirus (COVID-19) is available on the [Public Health England](#) (PHE) and [NHS](#) websites.



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