

A message from Shellina Prendergast, KCC Cabinet Member for Communications, Engagement and People

Dealing with the unforeseen challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic has taken a significant toll on communities across Kent, and the impact on people, businesses and key services has been unimaginable.

Kent County Council is on the frontline of the response to the virus and has stepped up to the challenge of maintaining core services, while focussing on supporting the most vulnerable people in Kent. We have done this by working hand in hand with district and borough councils and an army of incredible volunteers in every part of the county.

I am heartened by this amazing community response and immensely grateful to the thousands of people who have given their time and gone above and beyond in their efforts to look after people that need it most.

At the most local level parish councils have worked tirelessly to coordinate help and support in their communities, keeping an eye on vulnerable people and encouraging more people to come forward and help.

Now the government has started to map out its guidance that will help us to plan and prepare for the next stage of the response to Covid-19 in Kent.

Nobody knows how long it will take to recover socially and economically from this crisis, but I assure you that Kent County Council will be at the heart of this recovery, helping residents and businesses to adjust to a new version of normality as the government's emergency measures are wound down.

While such planning is underway, we will of course maintain our focus on supporting those vulnerable people in the county who will need to be shielded and cared for for some time to come. Most importantly, we will continue to ensure we are effectively working hand in hand with the amazing teams out in the hearts of communities in every part of Kent.

We will also continue to support social care providers in reducing the cases of Coronavirus in our care homes. And we will work closely with schools across Kent, as the government gives further details of their plans to reopen some year groups in the next few weeks as well as strengthening our support for businesses in Kent, particularly those in the retail and hospitality sectors.

As we develop our response and make the changes we need to, it's more important than ever to make sure Kent residents have reliable, up to date information about our services. The best ways to keep in touch are to follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and check our website www.kent.gov.uk/coronavirus for the latest updates. You can now also [subscribe to receive Kent County Council information by email](#).

Finally, I want to thank all the dedicated staff in the NHS, in local authorities and across the public, community and voluntary sectors who continue to deliver vital services through such challenging times. But equally, I also want to thank everyone who, by following the government's instructions, is helping to control the spread of Covid-19 in Kent.

With best wishes to you and your families,
Shellina Prendergast

Website, social and mailing list awareness

We continue to face a huge challenge from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) and its impact on our lives and work. We are committed to ensuring we continue to deliver services - though we recognise that, in these challenging times, some of these will be affected as we follow government advice.

There's lots of information on our website including:

- updates on [how our services are being affected](#)
- how we're supporting vulnerable people through [Kent Together](#)
- advice and suggestions on how to [look after your mental health and wellbeing](#)
- what support is available for [local businesses](#)
- information on [the latest scams affecting Kent](#)

You can also follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest updates and information [join our mailing list](#) to receive Kent County Council news, updates and information by email.

Kent Together has been set up to help with*:

- Making sure I have enough food and other general supplies to cover a few days
- Picking up a prescription
- Phoning, Skyping or Facetiming me to see a friendly face
- Making sure I have some simple recipes to hand
- Preparing meals for the freezer
- Walking my dog
- Putting out the bins
- Taking in a parcel
- Checking if any of my planned appointments have been cancelled before I travel

[*Not all types of support are available in all areas.]

The Kent Together helpline is being coordinated by Kent County Council, feeding information through to the network of volunteers, district and borough council teams and local support groups. People's needs will be assessed, and staff will liaise with Community Hubs in the districts to prioritise those who need urgent help. It is helping people get the support they need, when they need it.

Requests can be made online at www.kent.gov.uk/KentTogether or you can call us on **03000 41 92 92** (Text Relay 18001 03000 41 92 92. D/deaf BSL users can text KCC's Sensory Services team on 07920 154 315 for help making a request).

Service updates

Many of our services have changed due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. Further changes are likely as we move out of the worst of the pandemic and the rules on social distancing change. Check their current status [on our Services Update page](#) or look through our [Your Questions Answered page](#) for more detailed information.

Keep in touch

Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) for the latest updates and information. You can also [subscribe to receive Kent County Council information and updates by email](#).

How you can help

Support for voluntary groups and individuals is being offered by district and borough councils across Kent communities. [Find out more about volunteering](#). Of course, the most important way we can all help prevent the spread of coronavirus is to follow the [government's instructions on staying alert and safe \(social distancing\)](#).

Taking care of yourself

We understand that coronavirus has created uncertainty and the constant news can feel overwhelming. You may be adjusting to a different way of life, with children off school and many people working from home as well as not seeing family, friends and colleagues. Have a look at our tips on [how to keep yourself well](#).

Schools and education

Schools and other educational settings are closed for most children. Our [education questions and answers](#) on how this is affecting schools in Kent provides some helpful local information to supplement the [government's information for parents and carers](#).

Beware of scams

Whilst COVID-19 has brought out the best in the vast majority of people, unfortunately, there are also some people who are seeking to exploit the situation for personal gain. Please check our [scam alerts page](#) for the latest information on how to spot and protect yourself from scams.

Supporting local businesses

Our [COVID-19 information page for Kent businesses](#) brings together a range of useful links for businesses to help them through the pandemic, as well as information on business scams and Kent Trading Standards advice videos. We also have a section for business on our [COVID19 "Your Questions Answered" page](#).