

Reaching Out to those who have been badly affected by Covid-19

Dorset Council is launching a joint campaign with Citizens Advice to raise awareness of the range of support available to people financially affected by COVID-19 so they can seek advice and support before they reach crisis point. Hopefully, this will result in fewer people becoming homeless, becoming ill, or hurting others. The campaign will run initially until the end of March 2021, and will be structured around three themes:

- Work and skills - employment rights, careers advice, access to training
- Money and home - rent or mortgage advice, managing debt, accessing benefits, finding somewhere to live, foodbanks, other financial help
- Health and relationships - health & wellbeing advice including signposting to mental health and domestic abuse support

Who do we want to reach?

For many people in Dorset, this will be the first time they have experienced such financial difficulties. We want to reach anyone who is worried about, or is facing redundancy; especially young people aged 16-25 (who are most at risk of unemployment or reduced hours); anyone struggling with finances such as paying their rent or mortgage or other bills such as car or household, education or childcare costs.

Key messages:

A problem shared is a problem halved – help, support and advice is available whatever challenges COVID-19 has thrown at you

Lots of people are in the same boat - you're not alone and shouldn't be afraid to ask for help or advice, before things get more difficult

Help is available online at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out

If you would like to talk call 03444 111 444, calls charged at a local rate

Specialist advisers can help with immediate problems and offer advice for the longer term

All advice is free, confidential and impartial

How are we getting the message out?

The campaign will run across a number of channels including:

Dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Targeted digital advertising, including pop ups and banners

Social media - organic and paid for

E-newsletters

Media relations

Dorset Council News magazine

Via Dorset Councillors, town and parish councils and partner organisations

Posters at customer contact points e.g. libraries, schools, GP surgeries and pharmacies

Customer facing council employees

We'll be featuring a series of 'experts' from partner organisations such as Citizens Advice and Job Centre Plus, as well as case studies of real people so that others can recognise and identify with situations and circumstances, prompting them to get help sooner rather than later. The key spokespeople will be Cllr Laura Miller, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health, Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing and Daniel Cadisch, Lead representative for Citizens Advice.

Please share this campaign with friends, family, and your local community. As a trusted voice, you can get the word out that help and support is available for people at this time. Watch out for our social media posts, news releases, e-newsletters, and other activities.

A campaign toolkit is also available on our website at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out

To find out more information, visit www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out, or contact Claire Lodge, Senior Communications Officer by emailing claire.lodge@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

Dorset Adult Social Care

A new website is now live and ready to help people find joined-up information from local NHS, council and community organisations.

Developed by Dorset Council, Our Dorset Adult Social Care can help people with: applying for or renewing their Blue Badge, reporting a concern about someone who is vulnerable, finding and paying for care and getting equipment and other support to live independently at home. The site aims to help people live safe independent lives for longer. Please take a look and help us spread the word to residents in your ward areas.

Durlston Country Park

Congratulations to colleagues at Durlston Country Park who I know are delighted to have received Gold in the Accessible and Inclusive Tourism category at the National Visit England Awards. This is a great achievement and we hope it will encourage more visitors to discover Durlston and the range of excellent facilities it has to offer. Well done to the team on this fabulous and well-deserved award.

Planning Reforms

A number if you have asked what affect the Planning reforms touted by government are likely to have on Planning and other issues such as formative Neighbourhood Plans. The short answer is that we are not sure. The longer answer is that we are not at all convinced that Government is not just announcing something that they may find extremely difficult to deliver. The Planning System is regularly criticised but for all its faults it does allow considerable scope for consultation and the idea of fast track procedures with reduced consultation does not appeal to many of us. There is currently a national consultation on this, and we are working with our MP s to express our concerns.

Bus Services

We have been instructed that services that take school children are not now to be available to the public and must not take pupils from more than one school. This has very unfortunately led to the cancellation of some services that are already subsidized and for which the Service provider will not put on an additional service.

Following government guidance we have developed a detailed travel plan for schools which amongst other things advises Bus companies to use the same driver for the same routes to provide consistency for pupils, regular cleaning of Buses, no face to face seating for pupils and one route one school mantra. This means we are incurring additional costs of around £2M which is not covered by the additional grant so far of £333K.

Surgery

We are not holding face to face meetings now. However, we would be delighted to ring and talk to you. Please ring or email us with the subject matter so that we can prepare ourselves. Peter's email address is peterwharf@hotmail.com telephone 07986600799 and Laura's is cllrlaura.miller@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk telephone 07814 569563.

Peter Wharf & Laura Miller, Dorset Councillors for West Purbeck