

Community Reassurance Teams

Progress Report 18th May 2020

Summary

Since the Community Reassurance Teams (CRT) started operating 23rd March and the Emergency Food Hub (EFH) on 30th March, the following has been achieved:

- Five area teams with 37 staff involved are operating across the county. Day Services staff are joining next week
- A truly cross-disciplinary approach has been adopted with support from Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services, Public Health, Passenger Transport, Customer Services, Welfare Team, Organisational Development, HR, ICT, Communications, Adults and Children's Services, Social Prescribing and the NHS and CCG.
- Food parcels have been delivered to 911 households, helping over 2,000 people
- 629 follow up calls to those receiving parcels have been made
- 623 volunteer organisations and businesses have been collated on a new Community Volunteering Directory that is being shared internally
- £75K Community Grant scheme established and 74 groups have been supported to date
- 17 training sessions have been arranged
- Procedure for food purchasing and invoicing has been set up
- 130 discussions with groups and individuals have been logged, with 155 referrals addressed
- 31 staff have been identified who could expand CRT to offer a more robust emergency response
- Data has been amalgamated from a number of sources, including the shielded and vulnerable, along with a range of locally determined vulnerabilities
- The CRT is linked to the developing Mental Health and Bereavement Support for families, more details can be found here, <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/mental-health-and-wellbeing/>
- The CRT helps provide Safeguarding messages to community groups and individuals

Lisa Jones is leading on the day to day management of CRTs, bringing her experience and expertise from working in Public Health and Adult Services.

The next phase of this work is now being considered, as staff start to return to substantive posts.

Introduction

As part of Shropshire Council's response to the Covid-19 epidemic, emergency planning was introduced, including a Community Response Partnership.

The Partnership has overview of several initiatives including:

- Community Reassurance Teams
- Emergency Food Hub
- Data development
- Communication
- Community resource pack
- Community Grants Scheme

- Telephone reassurance team
- Children and Young people, including schools and education
- Registrar services
- Covid-19 response VCSA group
- Mental Health
- Safeguarding

This report specifically covers the Community Reassurance Teams and the Emergency Food Hub, looking at progress to date and future development ideas.

Vulnerable People

With regard to the current crisis, vulnerable people have been categorised as follows:

- ‘Shielding’ Individuals (as per Government List)
- Self-Isolated without support (with means to pay). *N.B. this list expected to grow as infection rate increases and family/friends no longer available to collect on their behalf.*
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- Homeless/Accommodated Homeless
- Low Income Families (Free School Meals entitled)
- Children in Need (on Child Protection Register)
- Economically Impacted as a result of ‘Stay at Home’ instructions (No income/Very low income). *N.B. We will need to work appropriately with existing Welfare system to ensure food is provided to most needy.*

Community Reassurance Teams

The Community Reassurance Teams (CRT) were set up on 23rd March 2020.

The CRT provide support to the new and existing community groups set up in response to COVID-19, Town and Parish Councils and other organisations.

They work to ensure that the Council has information about community activity, so they can advise residents, and that the groups have the information and guidance they need. The role of the CRT is to understand the new solutions from within the community, identify them as being appropriate to solving a particular challenge and support the solution to be put in place. They are also identifying gaps in provision and acting as emergency backup if needed. The Teams work with communities to complement and enhance the amazing work already happening to ensure that everyone gets the help and support that they need to stay at home and stay well and healthy.

Geographical areas

There are five teams:

- Central (Shrewsbury, Pontesbury, Atcham, Cressage and surrounds)
- North West (Oswestry, Ellesmere, Wem and surrounds)
- North East (Whitchurch, Market Drayton and surrounds)
- South West (Ludlow, Bishop’s Castle, Clun, Craven Arms, Church Stretton and surrounds)
- South East- (Bridgnorth, Cleobury Mortimer, Broseley, Much Wenlock, Shifnal and Albrighton and surrounds)

Staffing

There is a countywide team, with key links to other services, including the CCG made up of 18 people.

Countrywide support includes:

- Overall management
- Adult Services
- Social Prescribing
- Hospital Discharges
- Children's Services
- Transport
- Community Grants
- Communication
- DBS checks
- Food Parcel Follow Up
- NHS Volunteers

Lisa Jones has picked up the day to day management of the CRT. Lisa has experience and expertise of dealing with vulnerable people and connections to colleagues in specialist Public Health and Adult Services and will be able to offer more effective support to staff now the focus has moved to referrals.

Each area team has the following staff:

- **Community Reassurance Team Leader**- This role is to lead on the co-ordination of CRT staff and activity in their designated area and to be the liaison between the CRT and other Council teams, and key agencies. They make sure they have the latest Government and local guidance to pass on to community groups.
- **Community Reassurance Team Co-ordinators**- Each of the five areas will be split into key market towns and surrounding areas. The Co-ordinators are staff who have local knowledge and will lead on mapping the current activity of voluntary groups and businesses in these areas and identifying gaps in provision.
- **CRT Member Support**- The Place Plan Officers help each of the teams by being the key contact for Shropshire Council Members and Town and Parish Councils. They liaise with SALC who will communicate with Town and Parish Councils, providing consistent messages.
- **CRT Officers**- These members of staff will be contacting local voluntary groups, voluntary organisations, businesses, Pharmacies and others who are offering support to the community and contacting vulnerable people in areas where there is no support currently. Each Officer will be allocated a smaller local area, with which they are familiar.
- **CRT Community Grant Co-ordinators**- Each team has one or more members of staff that will help local groups access the new Community Grant scheme.
- **CRT Social Care links**- in each area, members of staff from the local Adult Social Care and Children's Services teams are aligned to the CRT to ensure teams are working together and there is limited duplication of efforts. Where possible, the CRT will work to reduce pressure on these teams, so they can deal with people in most need. The CRT will also be helping

those discharged from hospital have access to community support. Michael Lewis is taking the lead with this.

The majority of staff are from the Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services, with help from Public Health, Housing and other services.

There are 37 staff directly involved in the area teams. Many of the Day Services team will be joining CRT next week.

Whilst the use of the NHS volunteers is being investigated, it is not clear yet how they might be used to compliment, rather than duplicate existing community activity.

Consideration has been given to increasing the number of staff involved in the CRT and a list of potential people is available.

Practical Help

Practical support has been offered by:

- Outdoor Partnerships Countryside Maintenance Team led by Richard Knight
- Passenger Transport Team led by James Willocks and Chris Purcell
- Shrewsbury Town Council's Grounds Maintenance Team led by Matt Willcoxon

Enterprise Cars have been made available to all CRT Leads and are being delivered to their home addresses.

The Community Offer

A new Community Volunteering Directory has been developed, with information gathered by the CRT and other services. This is now available on line:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/information-for-the-public/community-social-networks/>

Food Purchasing

Several enquiries have been made regarding elderly people who do not have debit or credit cards and are no longer able to go out to get cash. A procedure has been developed to enable the CRT to order food and other supplies to be delivered to these people using Shropshire Council purchasing cards. Deliveries will be by local businesses or community groups unless there is no such service locally, in which case the CRT will deliver.

Emergency Food Hub

An Emergency Food Hub was set up from 30th March 2020, in response to the Government call for local delivery for Shielded people for the initial two weeks until the national delivery scheme could be implemented. This was originally sited at the old Courts at Shirehall but has now moved to the Food Enterprise Centre at Battlefield.

Whilst national deliveries are now being made, the Food Hub is now delivering as follows:

- Top up supplies to the Shielded group, including for those with special dietary requirements
- Food parcels for those newly unable to afford it due to Covid-19 impacts

Local Food Banks are involved in this process and the Welfare Team help ensure parcels are delivered to those in genuine need.

A letter encouraging people to talk to CRT staff about alternative access to supplies has been added to food parcels.

The Food Parcel follow up team have been contacting people who have received a food parcel to see if there is another solution to their issues and if any other support is required. Mirka Duxberry is leading the team which started 6th April 2020. This team of 15 consists of library, specific project, HR and day services part time staff members.

Staffing

Neil Felton and Melanie France are leading this process, with Pete Banford, Outdoor Partnerships Manager leading Operations. Deliveries are being made by the Countryside Maintenance Team, led by Richard Knight. 11 people are currently involved.

Transport

The deliveries have been made using Council fleet vehicles through the Outdoor Partnerships Team. If deliveries increase, there is an option to use the contracted private hirers used by Passenger Transport for education journeys.

Communication

All enquiries from the public come through the Customer Service Centre on the dedicated Covid-19 Helpline: 0345 6789 028.

A generic email address has been set up for referrals from Customer Services and for local groups to contact the team: communityreassurance@shropshire.gov.uk

A report detailing the activity of the CRT and CRT Lead details has been sent to Elected Members, SALC and the VCSA.

Details of funding and support for communities is on the Shropshire Council website: <https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/coronavirus/resources-and-grant-funding-opportunities-for-local-communities/>

A communication plan is needed, along with an e-newsletter to all those on the Community Volunteering Directory to make sure all parties are kept up to date. Sarah Nelsey is looking to develop that for the team.

Training

A programme of 30-minute training sessions started on 6th April to ensure the CRT staff understand Covid-19, safety requirements and other services. These have been organised by Naomi O'Hanlan from Public Health.

So far the following sessions have been delivered:

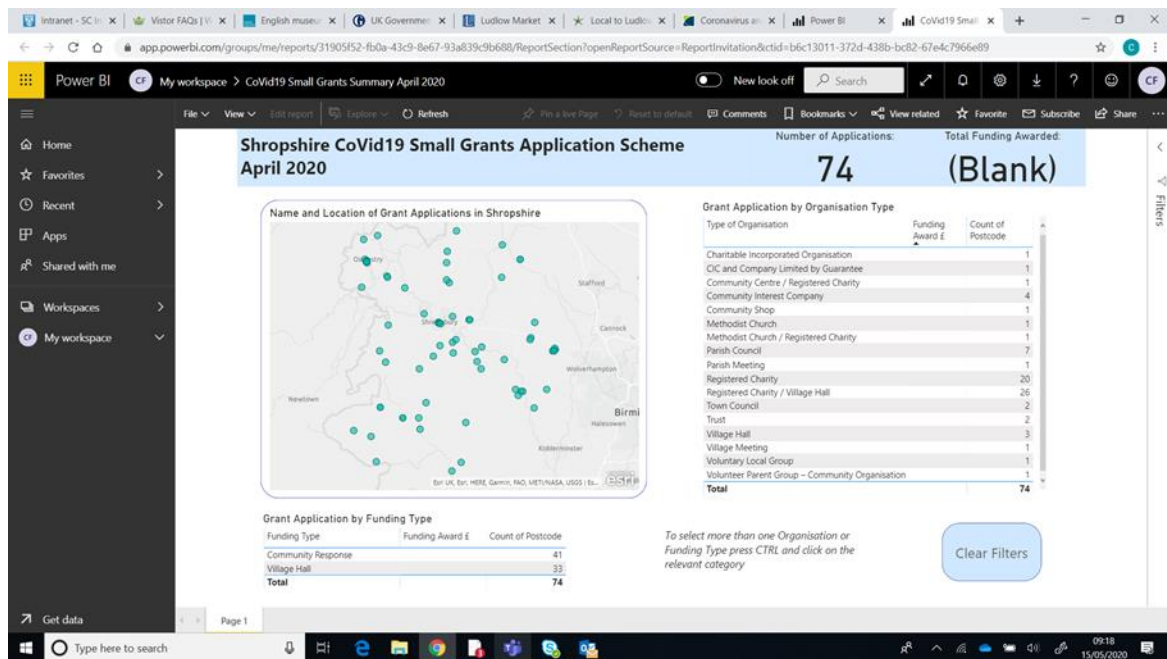
- Covid-19 Health Protection
- Children's and Young People Early Help
- Education/ Schools
- Mental Health
- Children's Social Care
- Adults Social Care
- Children's and Young People Safeguarding
- Adults Safeguarding

More sessions are being arranged as necessary. These are now being recorded, so they can be shared more widely in the future.

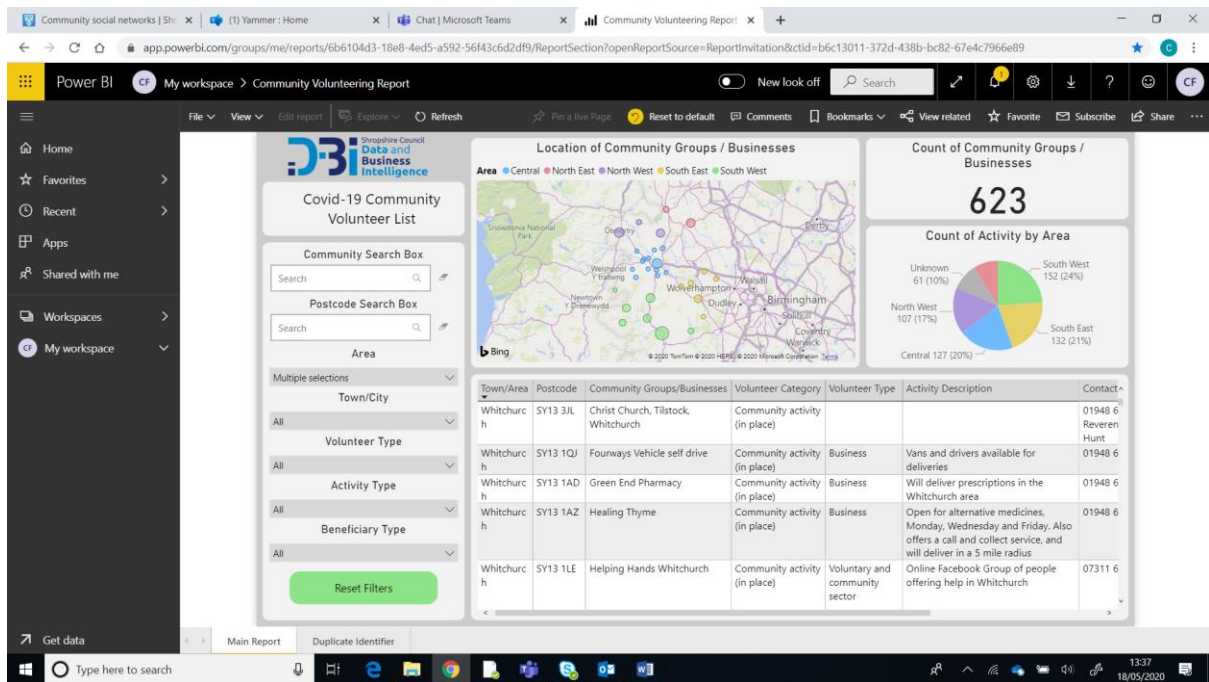
Progress

Since the Community Reassurance Teams (CRT) started operating on 23rd March and the Emergency Food Hub (EFH) on 30th March, the following has been achieved:

- Five area teams with 37 staff involved are operating across the county. 11 Day Services staff are helping with member support, 8 are focusing on food packaging and delivery, 2 on food procurement and 2 on administration of the emergency food hub, 14 are working on food parcel follow up calls. 14 other staff have been identified for emergency stand by to join the teams if needed.
- A truly cross-disciplinary approach has been adopted with support from Culture, Leisure and Tourism Services, Public Health, Passenger Transport, Customer Services, Welfare Team, Organisational Development, HR, ICT, Communications, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Social Prescribing and the NHS and CCG.
- A Vulnerable Persons Database – more detail below
- £75K Community Grant scheme established, with 74 organisations supported to date.



- 17 training sessions have been arranged including public health nursing and sexual health, safe ways of working, having difficult conversations, Enable, safeguarding, social prescribing, Children's Services, Social Care and mental health
- Procedure for food purchasing and invoicing has been set up
- Enterprise cars have been allocated to each area.
- 31 staff have been identified who could expand CRT to offer a more robust emergency response
- 623 volunteer organisations and businesses have been collated on a new Community Volunteering Directory that is being shared internally



The total number of people contacted through this process is shown in the table below:

Item	Number – figures from Friday 15 th May
Total no. of calls to LA Covid community helplines:	1732
Total shielded	Over 10,144
Self-Identified Vulnerable (non-shielded) those identified through the national database	522
Shielded and non-shielded requesting support	7859
Total Services Provided to Vulnerable People	
Food parcels – number of people	2000+
Phone calls to shielded	5453
Parcel collection-(unwanted govt parcel)	15
PPE delivery	25
Phone calls to people who received food	629
Homeless food parcels	220
CRT contacts	155
Total contacts	8,497 +
Numbers of Care / Medical Supply:	Approx. 30
Food Deliveries Made: Households	911
Volunteers Groups approx.	186
Number of volunteers unknown	

Customer feedback, especially regarding the EFH has been exceptional. Some examples are included in appendix 1.

Types of referral

The table below shows the types of referrals that have been made through CRT:

TYPE OF REQUEST	SOUTH EAST	SOUTH WEST	CENTRAL	NORTH EAST	NORTH WEST	TOTALS PER TYPE OF REQUEST
FOOD/TOILETRIES	6	19	35	11	14	85
MEDICINE	2	0	1	1	2	6
BEFRIENDING	0	0	0	0	1	1
WELFARE CHECK	12	6	20	8	8	54
OTHER	1	1	1	3	3	9
TOTAL PER AREA	21	26	57	23	28	
GRAND TOTAL OF REQUESTS	155					

5.0 Data

Data has been made available from different services/ organisations and has enabled us to capture develop a vulnerable person's database, as well as to understand and track all of the actions that have been taken to support people. The data includes:

- NHS Shielded and vulnerable
- Social care
- DWP
- Housing Association
- Blue badge holders
- Assisted Bin collection
- Council Tax
- Police marker
- Concession (65+)
- Index of multiple deprivation
- And more

Staff feedback

For staff involved in the CRT and EFH, the Covid-19 pandemic has fired-up new enthusiasm. The staff came forward voluntarily and have been exceptional in the way they have grasped the challenge and delivered to mitigate it. Other staff that continue with business as usual in those teams that have been impacted have, in the main part, also risen to the challenge without complaint.

Staff have welcomed the opportunity to work with colleagues from other services and break down barriers between Directorates. Any issues were positively negotiated, with staff supporting each other without question. Collaboration has been key to the success of the approach.



Figure 1- The Emergency Food Hub team from Outdoor Partnerships

Future development

The role of the CRT and EFH will be needed for some time yet but many staff are needing to focus more on their substantive posts. The demand from the community is falling. Food parcels delivery requirements are also decreasing as more people find local alternatives and the supermarkets are better able to cope with deliveries. The next phase of both initiatives needs clarifying and the implications of the new ways of working on future Council service delivery are being explored.

Appendix 1- – Customer Feedback

We have received several compliments regarding the Emergency Food Hub in particular. Some of these are shown below:

“I am an extremely vulnerable person and I would just like to take this opportunity to thank you ever so much for the food deliveries you have been providing. I am so, so very grateful especially during these strange times. You and your volunteers work is very much appreciated and valued. Please do not forget this. I hope you're all safe and well during this outbreak and I send you my warmest wishes.”

“Just to say will you please thank Neil for delivering a food parcel to Roderick today. In his words he was "well Chuffed and thought the parcel contained just the right things for an oldie"

“I just wanted to thank you so very much for being so kind and helpful. We received the food box today. We cannot believe how generous, amazing and varied they are. It made Niell and I really quite emotional.

I cannot explain how thankful we are for your help and kindness.”

“WOW!! Far from being a few basics, the box that was delivered a short while ago was LARGE and HEAVY and full of good food & drink, all delivered by a cheerful young man.

Bless you for including me in this marvellous scheme Andrea!”

“Hi I just wanted to thank everyone involved in organising and delivering my food parcel last week. It made such a difference to me. I’m truly grateful and I’m thoroughly enjoying the food! The delivery team were a joy to shout “hello” to out of the window. Their cheery waves also made a difference. I have no idea who to contact, so I hope you don’t mind me using this service to meet my ends. I’d be very grateful if you could pass on my message to those involved. A huge thank you to everyone. Wishing you all good health, peace of mind, and happiness,”

“From Christine and myself Stuart, would like to send you a big and kind thank you to all the staff and people who organised and delivered our food box, which was delivered to us on Fri 3rd April for which will be a huge benefit for us. You see Chris has a serious and rare form of multiple sclerosis and is wheelchair bound all day at home, and me, I’ve got type 2 diabetes and a 24/7 carer for her, as we haven’t been out since the 14th of March, it’s hard but we will see it thru. Anyway would you pass on our gratitude and praise to them, and also to wish you all, our best wishes and kindest regards.!”

“I am identified as extremely vulnerable should I get covid 19 having had a double lung transplant in November 2019. as such following my registration today received an emergency food box. I would like my very grateful thanks passed on to those responsible. The box is full of a very well thought out range of foodstuffs including some lovely looking fresh produce. it will all be used, and its provision is appreciated so much. not only is it providing me with practical support when neither I nor my husband can go out it also made me feel that I remain part of the community and that people do care about each other despite all the current problems. The work of all those who put these parcels together is vital and I thank you all so much.”