

COVID-19 COMMUNITY SUPPORT

We shared the **Community Helpline for Covid-19** and the Department for Communities have asked that the information below also be shared. It may be useful to your families.

The Covid-19 Community Helpline went live on Friday 27 March and operates 9am to 5pm, 7 days per week initially, although this will be kept under review and the service can be increased if necessary. The Helpline has been taking calls from members of the public who need advice and support relating to the COVID 19 emergency, initially linking people into local services.

Some of the services which can be accessed via the helpline include: delivery of food parcels to vulnerable people including those in the shielded group who have no other way to access food deliveries; information about retailers offering delivery in a local area; help from the voluntary and community sector to deliver prescription medication and advice on claiming benefits. Advice NI have put in place a detailed directory of community and voluntary organisations at both a local and regional level covering everything from domestic abuse, to mental health to local sports groups willing to walk dogs for vulnerable people. Helpline staff will provide a warm handoff to the relevant service if they are unable to deal with a query themselves, and are aware of the need for a warm handoff to the Nexus service if a caller reports domestic abuse during the course of the conversation.

The helpline is for vulnerable people who have no other method of accessing support. If a vulnerable person already has sufficient support in place, either from family and friends or from a voluntary organisation then they should continue to rely on that in the first instance.

On the question of whether representatives could call the helpline on someone's behalf the answer is yes, as long as the person has given permission to the representative to share their details and act on their behalf.

The Helpline service also offers e-mail and text message response facility.

Telephone: 0808 802 0020

Email: covid19@adviceni.net

Text: ACTION to 81025