

# Devon Community Foundation

## COVID-19 Response Weekly Briefing 18 June 2020

Hello everyone and welcome to this week's briefing. We'd like to make this as useful and interactive as possible, so welcome feedback and suggestions about content.

If you know anyone else who'd be interested in receiving the briefing, feel free to forward, and encourage those to whom you forward to email [nicola@devoncf.com](mailto:nicola@devoncf.com) to be put on the mailing list. Briefings will come out on a Thursday.

Click on the **BOLD COLOURED** links to be redirected to useful resources - Right click on the links if you want to open it in a separate window.





## "We were built for this"

Following on neatly from last week's intro to the buzz around community-based mutual aid models, on Tuesday the national network of community organisations, Locality, released a report on the role of community organisations in the Covid-19 response.

[We Were Built for This](#) inhabits very similar space to our own in-progress Devonian review of the sector, and is well worth a read, but if 86 pages is too hefty for you, here's a summary. The report celebrates the 'remarkable, but not surprising' collective endeavour that provided community-based emergency response during the crisis. It includes several detailed case studies that explore what this looks like in places across the country, through a wide-ranging lens, that looks at the grassroots detail, but also considers the broader context of partnerships, local politics, and relationships with local authorities. It makes a number of key observations:

- **Existing social infrastructure** has been key to this crisis response, has enabled effective local systems to emerge, and has in places strengthened functional partnerships between local government and community organisations.
- **The role of community organisations as adaptable "cogs of connection"**, often despite, rather than because of the system has been strengthened. They have shown themselves able to support mutual aid initiatives without muscling in, and are key to ensuring the shoots of citizen action puts down longer roots. But they need support to meet the challenges of the future – *'We need to channel this surge of community spirit into a lasting framework of community power'*.
- Previous **inter-organisational friction**, exacerbated by siloed working and competitive commissioning, has been side-stepped in favour of collaborative and trust-based funding approaches.

This is a vision of social solidarity as central to life, not a temporary add-on, and one of society organised around collaboration and a radically dispersed power base, with a focus on neighbourhoods. The report is clear that there is a need for policymakers to 'unlock and strengthen' the community resources it celebrates, and outlines three 'opportunities':

**1: Support a community-powered economic recovery** • Expand the Community Ownership Fund to capitalise community organisations, by leveraging Dormant Assets and other funding to establish a £1bn investment plan for community assets • Put communities in charge of local economic development by ringfencing 25% of economic development funding for community-led partnerships.

**2: Create collaborative public services that unlock community power** • Support "power partnerships" to develop at a local level through long-term investment in councils and communities • Permanently embed procurement flexibility introduced during the crisis • Shift from competitive tendering to community collaboration

**3: Turn community spirit into community power** • Put neighbourhoods at the heart of the Devolution White Paper and strengthen community powers to lead change locally. • Provide £500m revenue funding to protect, strengthen and grow existing community organisations and provide a pathway for new mutual aid groups to become established.

Thoughts on how this marries with your own experience, and whether you feel these are the necessary next-steps all very welcome.



## Spotlight on ... Bereavement

Experiencing a bereavement is difficult at the best of times, but for those who have experienced a loss during lockdown, changes to end of life and palliative care, restrictions on visiting loved ones and limits on who can attend funerals, has made it especially hard. There have been an extra 62,000 deaths in the UK above the expected rate for this time of year, and although over recent weeks the number of deaths has fallen significantly, the number is still above normal for the time of year.

There has been a huge cross-sector effort to support those who are bereaved during this time. The NHS has set up a national bereavement helpline staffed by nurses to offer support, advice and guidance to those experiencing loss (call 0800 2600 400), and the Good Grief Trust has set up a dedicated [webpage](#) for people who have experienced a bereavement during this time. They have also moved their pop-up cafés online, to allow people to meet and talk to other people who have experienced a bereavement.

There has also been a big focus on explaining what is happening to children. This [video](#) by Belfast Health and Social Care Trust aims to help explain to children about how to say goodbye to people they have lost at this time. Winston's Wish have created a dedicated [webpage](#) of alternative ways for children to say goodbye when attending a funeral isn't possible.

### In Devon...

There have been relatively fewer deaths related to coronavirus in Devon than in the rest of the country. Up to mid-June this figure stood at around 550. However, this does not mean that those bereaved in other ways are unaffected by the crisis. Many people are more isolated than they have been before, and unable to access the usual social groups and places of worship that would help them through their bereavement at any other time as well as difficulties with visiting people in hospital and attending funerals. Hospiscare have extended their bereavement support to families of non-patients, who may be isolated, to help them work through it.

Pete's Dragons talked about the importance of building up a face-to-face relationship with the people they work with. Whilst this was there with existing beneficiaries, it has been difficult to build up trust with new beneficiaries who have come in post lockdown. They said that their support workers rely on instinct and non-verbal communication a lot and that, because this is far more difficult to read over video-call, there has been an increasing strain on support workers. They also said that many of their beneficiaries are vulnerable themselves, and so support workers are very careful to ensure they are always very aware and alert when working with families, which has added to their strain. They are planning on phasing in distanced walks to work with families over the next few weeks and months.

[Cruse, Devon](#) have adapted their bereavement support from face-to-face to remote, with additional training for volunteers.

[Pete's Dragons](#) have kept to their target of supporting families who are referred to them within 48 hours, and with no waiting list, as they strongly believe that many of their beneficiaries need help immediately. They are delivering their services remotely, but they have found that their beneficiaries need more time with them than they would usually, and so have needed to increase the hours that their staff work to accommodate this.

[Families in Grief](#), based in North Devon, have been providing activity packs to children to use with remote support sessions, in lieu of home visits and group sessions

[Balloons](#) have developed additional training for their grief support workers to help people with coronavirus related bereavement, and also to help people navigate additional difficulties they may have related to coronavirus e.g. having been unable to visit someone in hospital.

[Hospiscare](#), whose bereavement support is usually only available to families of patients, have extended this to anyone who may be grieving in isolation, or unable to access usual support (e.g. from places of worship). They have also created a dedicated [COVID-19 webpage](#) with resources for adults and children.

[Blackdown Support Group](#) has had to stop running its bereavement support groups, but has continued to keep in touch with people who would usually attend by phone.

[Children and Families in Grief](#), who offer bereavement support to families in South Devon and Torbay, have been continuing to offer support via phone or video chat while they cannot do face-to-face work.

[Torbay Holiday Helpers](#) Network have had to cancel their upcoming holidays for the time being, but will reschedule these for all the families they have had to postpone when they are able.

## Call for Input : Children and Families

Next week we'll have a focus on the impact of the crisis on need in this area, and on the organisations who work to support those affected. Please do be in touch with any stories, examples, reflections from your own experience, or with details of people and organisations we ought to talk to. Please email: [insights@devoncf.com](mailto:insights@devoncf.com).

# DCF Funding Update



**Coronavirus**  
Click for our help & support



Click to donate to the  
Devon Coronavirus Response & Recovery Fund



Click to donate to the national appeal



#shouldertoshoulder #GiveLoveDevon

## **Blackdown Support Group - £2000**

The Blackdown Hills

Providing food parcels, medication deliveries, transport and developing community support for vulnerable and isolating residents

## **Rowcroft Hospice South Devon - £8835**

Torbay, South Hams, Dartmouth, Dawlish, Totnes, Teignmouth

To enable staff to work from home and provide palliative care in patients' homes

## **Significant Seams CIC - £1635**

Dawlish, Bideford, Tavistock, CREDITON, Northam

Provision of craft kits for isolated people to participate in Quarantine Quilt project

## **Horticultural Therapy Trust - £1488**

Plymouth

Running and equipment costs for additional distanced gardening therapy sessions to meet rising demand as a result of coronavirus

## **Homemaker Southwest - £1000**

Torbay

Providing out-of-hours financial advice service in Torbay to meet rise in demand

**Plymouth Play CIC and Scrapstore - £2840**

Plymouth

To source, pack and deliver packs of creative kit for deprived families

**Plymouth YMCA -9090**

Plymouth & some surrounding areas

Support for young people, including emergency parcels and 1-to-1 support

**Devon & Cornwall Refugee Support - £3000**

Plymouth

Translation services - provision of support and advice in for refugees and asylum seekers who speak languages not already catered for

**Holsworthy Covid-19 Mutual Help Group - £3300**

Holsworthy and 18 surrounding parishes

Enabling transport of provisions and for essential hospital visits/NHS staff travel to work

**Exeter Leukaemia Fund - £4074**

Exeter

Meeting costs to enable remote support and in-own-home care for those with blood disorder

**Catholic Children's Society (Plymouth) - £4000**

Plymouth

Provision of essential white goods and furniture to families in need