

NewsRelease



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Emergency Food Provision – Community Shield starts in Essex

As the country prepares to enter its second weekend under unprecedented restrictions on movement, the scale of the challenge of providing food to our vulnerable residents is significant.

Category A residents are those with the highest risk, including those with severe, pre-existing medical conditions. Over the weekend, Essex County Council has mobilised help for over 1,000 of our most vulnerable residents who needed food provisions. We remain determined that nobody should go hungry or be forced to go to the shops putting their health at risk, and have worked throughout the weekend to ensure we keep our residents safe.

The next most-vulnerable residents - the over 70s, pregnant women and people with underlying health conditions – will receive a message from GP surgeries on Tuesday and Wednesday, to check if they need food supplies.

Cllr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said: “I am delighted to see how everyone has pulled together to make this happen so quickly. This has been a whole system effort and, along with our dedicated network of volunteers, we are committed to ensuring that every Essex resident - particularly those that are most vulnerable - has the support they need at this time. I would like to thank everyone that has and continues to work so hard in such challenging circumstances.”

Over the course of the last week, we have established a central food distribution centre in Witham, obtained enough food to provide over 220 initial food packages and are implementing our plans to massively scale this up to support all residents who require it.

The weekend required the team to overcome significant challenges – for example, no vegetarian food was supplied so had to be commissioned at short notice from local company Purple Olive. The food received from Government comprised of catering sized supplies of, for example noodles and porridge, which all needed splitting into smaller parcels. These supplies then required supplementing from local supermarkets.

We are appealing to supermarket managers to urgently contact us to support food deliveries to people who need it around the county and to help us with providing food, essentials or delivery services in their area.

We also need an army of volunteers to help us make sure that our most vulnerable residents are supported. If residents and businesses would like to volunteer, they can help with a wide variety of roles, including shopping, transport, being a phone buddy, posting mail, delivering urgent supplies such as food and medicine. If you are able to help join over 3,000 Essex residents who have already signed up by visiting essex.gov.uk/coronavirus and clicking on 'Volunteer to help your community'.

ENDS