

Here is the 12<sup>th</sup> weekly newsletter sent on behalf of **The Collaborative Communities Covid-19 Board**.

This week, we wanted to share with you [Trudy's story of life in lockdown](#). 88-year-old Trudy, who lost her husband two-years-ago, tells us in her own words about the loneliness of lockdown and how she found support in the community. This honest account is like so many experiences across Suffolk. Thank you for allowing us to share your very touching story, Trudy.

This week the newsletter covers:

- [Changes for those who are shielding](#)
- [Update on Test and Trace](#)
- [Guidance for preparing to open village halls and community buildings](#)
- [Suffolk for leaders of volunteers in community settings responding to Covid-19](#)
- [Volunteer Training for East Suffolk](#)

**[Changes for those who are shielding](#):** As you will have seen, this week the Government announced another wave of measures to ease lockdown restrictions. One of these applies to people who are shielding. From July 6<sup>th</sup>, those who are shielding and live alone will be able to create support bubbles with one household of any size. They will also be able to meet in groups of up to six outdoors while maintaining social distancing rules. From August 1, extremely vulnerable people who are at most risk from becoming ill from coronavirus will no longer need to shield. However, they should still follow social distancing guidelines when outside their homes and wash their hands regularly to reduce the risk of being infected. Support packages from government will remain until the end of July to help people transition.

## Home, But Not Alone

Supporting vulnerable people in Suffolk

The Home, But Not Alone free phoneline is for people who need **urgent** help and support during the Coronavirus pandemic. It is only for people who do not have support available from friends, family or neighbours and are struggling for food, medicines or other essential supplies.

### Coronavirus Emergency Phoneline

 **0800 876 6926**

9am-5pm every day  
For all other enquiries please visit: [www.suffolk.gov.uk/homebutnotalone](http://www.suffolk.gov.uk/homebutnotalone)



### **Life in lockdown: Trudy's story**

**“My 93-year-old brother has the virus – I’ve been told there’s not much hope”**

**Trudy, 88, who lost her husband two years’ ago, talks about the loneliness of staying indoors and how her Re-engage group has kept her going.**

“I started going to the tea parties after my husband died two years’ ago. He was my childhood sweetheart – we’d been together for many years. It helped to be around people again. I’d been really going into my shell. Everyone was so good to me. If it wasn’t for the [Re-engage] group I don’t know what I would’ve done.

We went to some lovely places. And every few months, we’d have a tea dance, like we had in the old days. Everyone would get up and have a dance, even Edna. She finds it hard to move usually, but even she’d have a go.

I find staying in all the time very hard. I got in touch with the doctor to ask if I could go out and he said I mustn’t. I ask all the time but the advice doesn’t change. They don’t seem to tell the old folk much. It’s like they forgot about us.

It gets lonely on your own. It’s just terrible. My daughter is up in Yorkshire. The last time I saw her was in March. My brother is 93 and he’s got the virus. He’s too far for me to visit and we’ve been told there’s not much hope, so I just have to wait for the bad news really.

Maybe if I had people around me I’d feel different, but I’m frightened to go out now. It’s a dangerous world out there. Then again, sitting inside all these weeks, sometimes I wonder if I should just go out and take my chances rather than just being here on my own.

During the day, I’m always cleaning. I like a nice, clean house. My carer used to say, ‘Your home is so clean! Do you want to come and do mine?’ It always made me laugh! In all honesty, the reason I clean so much now is to keep busy. Some of the women I know say they just sleep all the time and that can’t be good for you.

I've still got my husband's ashes. I keep them in the living room next to some white lilies, which were his favourite. Sometimes I see him here in the house. Is that mad? I'll be having breakfast and I'll look over and see him in his armchair, pulling his socks on. I guess some people say the ones you love never leave you.

I think about what he would say about all this. He'd probably cope with it better than me.

Luckily, I get lots of calls from my tea party group. We have a conference call once a month which is like going out on Sundays again. You get to have a real chat with people.

Once of the volunteers, Gary phones me all the time to see how I am too. He's a lovely chap. He always calls when he says he will and I really like that. There are really good people out there. Everyone is trying to help and I can't thank them enough.

We'll meet each other again. I know we will. But I just want to get it all over with and get back to normal."

The charity, Re-engage, supports people who are over-75, live alone and find it hard to get out in normal times. For more information visit: <https://www.reengage.org.uk/>

**Test & Trace in Suffolk:** We are making positive progress on the development of our Local Outbreak Control Plan and as part of this we have identified over 30 settings and cohorts that will require robust plans for both preventive actions and outbreak management as below:

- Complex settings; these include care homes, schools, workplaces, places of worship and public spaces.
- Complex Groups; these include communities such as BAME, travellers, migrants and asylum seekers a
- Complex individuals which include those at risk of infection, mortality and morbidity.

The identification of these settings, groups and individuals has enabled risk assessments to be undertaken that have established how outbreaks can be managed

including identifying clear pathways and named groups and individuals that can offer wrap around support. This work has also helped in the development of robust advice and guidance that will help to prevent outbreaks occurring.

The Local Outbreak Control Plan builds on existing regional outbreak control plans, applied specifically to coronavirus and will be implemented by 30<sup>th</sup> June. Work is continuing on the development of a central function to deliver and co-ordinate Suffolk's response to outbreaks and preventative actions.

### **Guidance for preparing to open village halls and community**

**buildings:** Suffolk's 480 village halls and community centres closed to the public at the start of the pandemic. In line with current guidance, village halls and community buildings must still remain closed to the public unless permitted to be open to provide essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services (including the provision of food banks or other support for the homeless or vulnerable people, blood donation sessions, early years provision or support in an emergency).

ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) has guidance available to support village and community halls put in place measures needed to make buildings safe to use. The guidance can be found here: <https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/organisation-support/village-halls-and-community-buildings/covid-19-information/>

Community Action Suffolk's Governance and Community Buildings Advisor Jayne Vaughan will be available via zoom sessions to respond to questions and issues raised regarding the reopening of village halls and community buildings. Details of the sessions: WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 11.15AM – 12 NOON for Parish and Town Councils book [here](#). THURSDAY 2 JULY 10.30AM – 11.15AM for Management Committees and Trustees book [here](#)

### **Suffolk for leaders of volunteers in community settings responding to Covid-**

**19:** If you are a leader of volunteers you may feel the pressure of managing others and want to ensure you are doing the right thing to keep your volunteers and beneficiaries of your service safe. For this reason, Community Action Suffolk has arranged for regular peer support sessions led by Jane our Good Neighbour Scheme Officer, where you can chat about your role and be connected to others in similar situations to yourself. To book onto the 121 sessions or the peer support groups, please follow this [Link to the events](#).

**Volunteer Training for East Suffolk:** The East Suffolk Volunteer Passport is a free accredited level 1 short course to encourage new people into volunteering. The Passport will help learners to build their confidence, gain new skills and understand the variety of volunteer roles out there. It is also a great course to do if you are volunteering already (for example in response to Covid-19) and a way to gain an accreditation for the difference you have made. You will complete 6 topics that cover key skills needed to volunteer. Once completed, you will be awarded an accredited Level 1 certificate and a Volunteer Passport ID badge. The ID badge is a way of recognising the achievements and commitment to their volunteer status and can be worn when volunteering. There are two courses running in July (day and evening), please contact Faye at [faye.smith@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:faye.smith@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk) to book on.

I hope you have been enjoying the sunshine this week and the relaxation of some lockdown restrictions. Whilst these relaxation measures are welcomed, please remain cautious and apply common sense when you're out and about. Have a great week.

With best wishes,

**Chrissie Geeson (Head of Localities and Partnerships, Suffolk County Council)**  
**Chair of the Collaborative Communities COVID-19 Board**

The Board is made up of: Community Action Suffolk, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils, Church of England in Suffolk, East Suffolk Council, Ipswich Borough Council, Ipswich and East Suffolk CCG, Ministry of Defence, National Probation Service – Norfolk & Suffolk, Suffolk and North East Essex Integrated Care System, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, Suffolk Community Foundation, Suffolk Constabulary, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Voluntary Organisations Group, West Suffolk CCG, West Suffolk Council

