

Latest update from East Suffolk Council regarding the response to COVID-19 and the Home But Not Alone service

We have seen a decline on referrals, Going from 40 down to approx. 17 a day. This was noticed after the change in government guidance to 'Stay Alert'. That said, Friday we went up again to 31 referrals. We've been dealing with some very complex cases, and finding gaps in social care services. The postcard doesn't appear to have increased numbers at all, which we are putting down largely to the fact that the right people had already contacted us for help. We don't currently require any further funding as we still have quite a bit of the initial £600 we have on the Morrisons cards. Plus the remaining £600. Estimated spend of £200 so far. Most have been for delayed government boxes (Shielding) and one hardship due to the wait for Universal Credit payments to start (taking about 5 weeks at the moment). We've got a naughty list where we have seen people trying to pull the wool, but these are picked up quite quickly by our team as we ensure we have robust questioning in place. We were notified Friday of an issue on deliveries of Government food boxes, so we had a few calls this week saying they have been receiving boxes, but had suddenly stopped. Yesterday we had complaints (not that it's our boxes) that government boxes fresh produce had gone off. We have informed Nicole do she can take it further as clearly the potatoes in a returned box to us yesterday were off, growing roots and the smell stayed in the office a few hours after we binned them! Numbers over the weekends are very low anything from 5-7 so we have reduced staffing and hours. I take my laptop home and check at 12 and then again at 3pm and only deal with emergency cases. We are having Sundays off.

One case yesterday had me working most of the weekend. Gentleman has early onset dementia and had hospital appointment at Norwich hospital to test for prostate cancer. Wife wasn't allowed to travel with him due to her medical conditions. I passed it to social care and explained their only daughter lives 7 hour drive away and her son has chronic asthma. The social care person popped in the office to say she has sorted it, and informed me the daughter would be travelling down. I wasn't happy with that, so long story short, after numerous calls and Nicole assisting me, we managed to get one of our volunteers to take him. She pretty much spent the entire day at hospital with him! Nicole spoke yesterday about moving forward and what role the team will play, and maybe who else may be able to take over from us in the future. We also feel that our befriending service of 116 people should also continue beyond this pandemic. In total we have done 862 referrals since lock down.