

NEWS BULLETIN FOR THE GALWAY COUNTY PPN: SPECIAL COVID 19 EDITION MARCH 2020

Welcome to this issue of the Galway County PPN Newsletter. This edition focuses on the current situation arising from the outbreak of COVID19 (Coronavirus).

With the spread of this disease we are facing unprecedented challenges that must be tackled. As one community, however, Ireland has come together to rise to the challenge and is working in unity to help mitigate the impact of this crisis. This newsletter contains a collection of information- from government advice to local initiatives- to keep groups up to date on what is going on and what supports are available.

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GOVERNMENT INFORMATION

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN LAUNCHED

The **Government's new National Action Plan** in response to COVID-19 was launched on 16 March 2020.

The Plan sets out a 'nationwide cohesive approach' to tackle the global pandemic in Ireland.

In the Plan the Government acknowledge that community and voluntary organisations will be at the heart of the State's coordinated response to COVID-19. The Plan also outlines a number of key actions that will require the involvement of Ireland's 29,000 charities, community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises.



Specifically, the plan notes the importance of:

- promoting empathetic community engagement
- supporting community solidarity activity
- maintaining essential health and social services (which many community and voluntary organisations already deliver in partnership with the State)

Download the National Action Plan [here](#).

GOVERNMENT ACTION PLAN TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO COVID-19

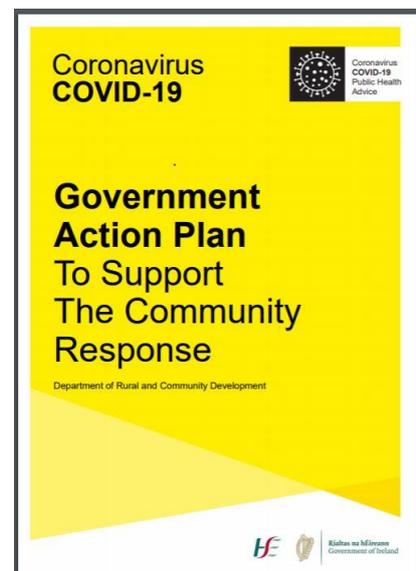
The **Department of Rural and Community Development** is leading the government effort to encourage and facilitate a community response to COVID-19.

This department has developed an **Action Plan** to support this work. The Action Plan has been put together in partnership with the Department of Health, other government departments, State agencies, local authorities, local development companies. It has worked closely with our extensive network of community and voluntary organisations.

The Action Plan sets out three key actions for initial focus in supporting a community response to COVID-19.

Action 1: Encourage and facilitate volunteering – with Volunteer Ireland, 22 Volunteer Centres, 7 Volunteer Information Services, supported by Local Development Companies.

Action 2: Provide community supports for older people – in partnership with ALONE.



Action 3: Establish a helpdesk facility for local community groups at c&vsupports@drcd.gov.ie

The Action Plan is available [here](#).

MINISTER CALLES ON COMMUNITIES

From: [Department of Rural and Community Development](#)

Mr **Michael Ring TD, Minister for Rural and Community Development**, has emphasised the important role of communities in supporting their vulnerable neighbours over the coming weeks.

The mobilisation of local community & voluntary groups and the engagement of volunteers at local level plays a vital part in ensuring that everyone living in the community can continue to have their needs met during uncertain times.

Mr Ring notes from social media in recent days the numerous offers of help from people within our communities to assist more vulnerable people. Mr Ring welcomes this and is working to coordinate and support these efforts. At the same time he advises communities and volunteers follow the most recent advices from the HSE and ensure that this is the message being delivered across our community network.



The Department is also working with Volunteer Ireland and the 22 Volunteer Centres around the country to enable them to match people who wish to volunteer with priority tasks, as identified by local statutory and voluntary service providers.

NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY TEAM SUBGROUP

As part of the Government's response to Covid-19, the **Department of Rural and Community Development is chairing an Advisory Group on the Community Response**. The Chair of the Advisory Group will report to the NPHEE Subgroup on Vulnerable People which is tasked with providing oversight and assurance with regard to the specific preparedness, measures and actions that need to be taken to protect vulnerable groups and individuals in society.

The overarching purpose of the Advisory Group is to encourage and facilitate community engagement in response to the needs of vulnerable people – such as older people or people with disabilities - living in the community.

The Advisory Group will assist the Department of Rural & Community Development to -

1. Identify particular geographic areas and/or client groups where additional community supports may be required
2. Define the nature of the supports that could be provided by community volunteers who are not professionally qualified

3. Identify measures to encourage members of the community to consider the needs of vulnerable people in their locality and to take appropriate action
4. Identify measures to facilitate people in communities who wish to volunteer: including linking with existing statutory and voluntary service providers, training, co-ordination, management etc.
5. Advise on appropriate communications generally and with relevant groups/stakeholders
6. Advise on proposals to be advanced for consideration of the NPHET Sub-Group on Vulnerable People

LATEST STATS ON COVID10 CASES IN IRELAND

The **Department of Health** publishes regular updates and statistics of the reported cases in Ireland.

These updates can be accessed [here](#).

[1. Hospital statistics](#)

[2. Gender](#)

[3. Age range affected](#)

[4. How COVID-19 is spreading](#)

[5. Healthcare workers](#)

[6. Hospitalised cases by age group](#)

[7. Cases by county](#)

LATEST MEASURES IN REPSONSE TO COVID19

The **Department of Health** provides the latest, updated information on the appropriate measures to take in response to the pandemic [here](#).

[1. Latest Update](#)

[2. Social Distancing](#)

[3. Updated Measures](#)

[4. Vulnerable Groups](#)

[5. Mass Gatherings](#)

[6. Closure of Schools, Creches, Childcare Facilities and Higher Education Institutions](#)

[7. The Delay Phase](#)



[8. Flights](#)[9. Employers and Employees](#)[10. Visiting Hospitals, Nursing Homes and Long Stay Settings](#)[11. Symptoms of COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\)](#)[12. Food Supply](#)[13. Schools](#)[14. Public Transport](#)[15. Facemasks](#)[16. Advice for parents and caregivers](#)[17. Updated Measures for Download](#)

POSTERS & GRAPHICS

The **Department of Health** has made a number of Public Health Advice Posters & Graphics available for groups and communities to distribute and display widely.

These can be downloaded [here](#).

The HSE now also has information available online in multiple languages: CN, PT, LT, IT, LV, RO, PL

Download [here](#).



FUNDING

NEW FUND TO BE SET UP TO HELP COMMUNITIES IMPACTED BY COVID-19

The [Community Foundation for Ireland](#) are starting an immediate response fund and are currently reaching out to donors and other supporters.



The fund aims to support organisations that are dealing with those most critically affected by the Coronavirus, particularly vulnerable groups such as the elderly and those with respiratory issues.

If you would like to find out more information please contact your [Grants and Donor Services](#)

[Executive](#), alternatively you can ring the office at 01 874 7354 and ask to speak to Hazel Hennessy or email info@foundation.ie

More information available [here](#).

LEO GALWAY SUPPORTS FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Businesses across Galway are currently in uncharted waters due to the ongoing Covid19 pandemic. Many are facing critical challenges, including temporary ceasing of trading, cash flow and financial difficulties, staff continuity options and an uncertain future.

Local Enterprise Office Galway is available to support local businesses in addressing these challenges and help ensure they're in the strongest possible position possible in the face of an unprecedented and continuously evolving situation.



The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation has put in place a package of business supports, some of which are available through Leo Galway.

Experts are available to assist with all queries at 091 509090, or through email at: info@leo.galwaycoco.ie.

More information available [here](#).

ADVICE FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS

PROTOCOL FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

Irish Rural Link have prepared a useful '**Protocol for Community Groups and Volunteers in delivering services**' during COVID19.

Access the protocol [here](#).



GUIDENCE FOR NON-PROFIT EMPLOYERS

In response to the COVID19 and the ensuing uncertainty for many employers and organisations, **The Wheel**, suggest developing a Contingency Plan.

The Wheel encourage groups to download the Business Continuity Planning spreadsheet they provide, which is adapted from the preparatory checklist of the Department for Business, Enterprise & Innovation. The document will help guide you on the most important aspects of planning for your organisation throughout the life cycle of this COVID-19 pandemic.



Access the Plan [here](#).

NATIONAL INITIATIVES

SENIOR LINE

Third Age Ireland runs a service called **SeniorLine**, a national confidential listening service for older people.

In response to the outbreak of COVID19 SeniorLine has put in place a number of protocols to support the many older callers from all over Ireland. Any caller, concerned about COVID19, will receive the most up to date guidance as recommended by Government sources.

SeniorLine is a FREEPHONE service and older callers can call free between 10am and 10pm every day of the year on 1800804591.

More information available [here](#).

ALONE

ALONE, the organisation that supports older people, has announced the launch of a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 in Ireland.



The supports offered include a new national support line and additional outreach and coordinated support. Professional staff will be available to answer queries regarding COVID-19 and give advice and reassurance where necessary.

The support line will be open **Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm**, by calling **0818 222 024**.

More information available [here](#).

FAMILY CARE SUPPORT (ONLINE)

In light of the curtailment of many face-to-face Family Carer support services, and following extensive feedback, [Care Alliance Ireland](#) has set up an **online** Family Carer Support Group.



Open to all Family Carers living in the Republic of Ireland, this new online private group will be facilitated by a number of professionals with social work and counselling qualifications, moderation experience and will be supported by a number of former and current family carers who have stepped forward to volunteer.

The group is now up and running and can be accessed [here](#).

More information available [here](#).

COVID19 AND FAMILY CARERS: CREATING A BACKUP PLAN

The [Care Alliance Ireland](#) understand that many family carers in Ireland are anxious about the current outbreak of the new virus COVID19.



The Care Alliance are not in a position to give medical advice, but have suggestions for families and carers of how to best plan for the future.

Their recommendations can be accessed [here](#).

LOCAL INITIATIVES

SANCTURY RUNNERS APPEAL

Sanctuary Runners Galway are asking for donations of soap, handwash, shower gels and hand sanitizer for the direct provision centres in Galway.

The Items can be dropped off using an easy non-contact box on March 21st in the Cathedral Car Park Galway 2-3 pm.



GALWAY COUNTY COUNCIL

Galway County Council has updated its service provision and opening hours during the COVID19 crisis.



Comhairle Chontae na Gaillimhe
Galway County Council

Latest updates available [here](#).

SVP GALWAY

SVP continues to offer help during Covid-19 crisis. Those seeking to contact SVP are asked to use its telephone or online facilities as the walk-in service at the regional office in Galway as other offices in the region will be closed.



If you wish to request help from SVP West, the contact details are telephone: 091563233 email: info.west@svp.ie or online at: svp.ie and use the tab "get help."

WHAT YOU CAN DO

COMMUNITY RESPONSE INITIATIVE

Covid Community Response brings communities together, collaborating and supporting those most in need during the Covid-19 outbreak in Ireland.



The Covid Community Response (CCR) team was set up to help coordinate ongoing national & local community initiatives in the fight against Covid-19, standardising communication and campaigns, as well as sharing resources.

The project comprises an open source build which will give others in the community the opportunity to register and integrate projects they are currently working on. The key to this project is that every group working through one system.

More information can be found [here](#).

VOLUNTEER IRELAND RESPONSE TO COVID-19

Together, Volunteer Ireland and the network of Volunteer Centres are working to support the community-based response to the COVID19 outbreak.



They are working to make sure all members of our communities are looked after during this time in the following ways:

volunteer ireland
obair dheonach éireann

- Prioritising recruitment, support and promotion of volunteer roles related to the COVID-19 response
- Communicating with local volunteers and organisations to let them know what is happening and connect them where relevant
- Providing advice and guidance on volunteering safely when dealing with vulnerable members of the public
- Sharing stories of those volunteering and raising awareness of the positive impact of volunteers

If you are well enough and would like to volunteer, or are looking for volunteers, in response to COVID19 please register with your **local Volunteer Centre**.

GALWAY VOLUNTEER CENTRE

Galway Volunteer Centre is continuing to provide supports to the community during the Covid19 crisis. In the last week more than 500 volunteers have signed up with Galway Volunteer Centre to offer their assistance.



Galway Volunteer Centre is currently working with community organisations to create volunteering roles and will be advertising these on the website.

Applications will be open to members of the public who register.

The service is requesting that anyone interested in volunteering register online at: www.volunteergalway.ie

The centre is also advising volunteers on how they can stay safe while volunteering during the crisis.

Organisations who need support or people to volunteer can email: info@volunteergalway.ie for more information. The service is completely free.

SOCIAL MEDIA

TWITTER HANDEL #COMMUNITYRESPONSEIRL (BY THE WHEEL)

To keep up to date with initiatives and community responses to COVID19 follow the hashtag #CommunityResponseIRL where important updates, calls to action and practical information from communities across the country are shared.



You can also start tweeting and sharing your stories of resilience and cooperation using the #CommunityResponseIRL hashtag.

The Wheel will acknowledge each and every instance they are made aware of, and will help your positive news reach as wide an audience as possible.

SERVICES:

BANK OF IRELAND

Bank of Ireland now offer a priority service in our branches for over 65s and carers from **10–11am, Mon to Fri**. Alternatively, over 65s and carers can call **1800 946 146** (9.30am-4.30pm)

SHOPS

Some of Ireland's biggest supermarkets have announced designated shopping hours for older people 

DUNNES STORES:  11am - 1pm

TESCO:  Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings up to 9am

LIDL:  9am - 11am

ALDI:  11am - 1pm

JOYCE'S  offer a free collection/delivery service to elderly shoppers. Call: 093 36216

SPORT

While we are encouraging people to stay active during this time please heed the HSE guidelines for social distancing outside.

Please see poster for reference:

Age & Opportunity are providing online seated and standing exercise sessions, 'Movement Minutes', designed for older adults.

A great resource for those at home with access to social media.

Please share this information with anyone you know who would be interested.

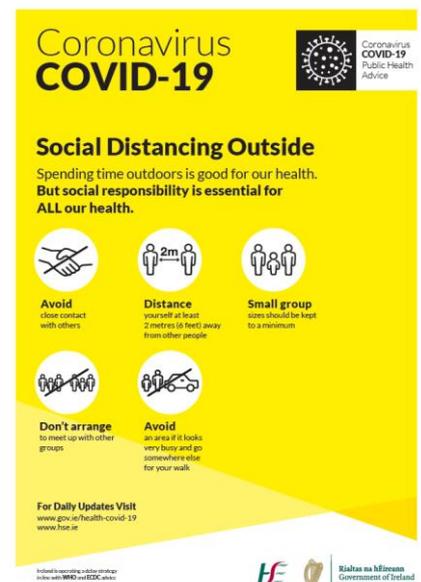
Keep an eye on their Facebook page for more: [Age & Opportunity](#)

Siel Bleu Ireland

Is a social enterprise and a charity that makes exercise accessible for everyone. An incredible team of trainers are dedicated to bringing exercise from their home to yours. Here is the schedule for the upcoming week!!

There are two classes a day - A community class on **Facebook** at 11am & a Nursing Home class on **Youtube** at 2pm.

More information available [here](#).



 **LIVE EXERCISE CLASS SCHEDULE!!**

MARCH	11AM	2PM
FRI 20TH	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH DEBORAH	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH SHANE
SAT 21ST	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH THOMAS	SEARCH
SUN 22ND	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH PAUL	@SIELBLEUIRELAND
MON 23RD	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH JAMES	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH MARTINA
TUE 24TH	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH PAUL	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH MARTINA
WED 25TH	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH MICHELLE	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH SHANE
THU 26TH	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH MAGGS	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH SHANE
FRI 27TH	  AT HOME COMMUNITY CLASS - WITH SHANE	  NURSING HOME CLASS - WITH MARTINA

LIBRARY SERVICES

Due to the current Covid19 crisis all libraries will remain closed and all events will be cancelled until Mar 29th. But Libraries Ireland would like to remind you that they have a range of online resources still available for all patrons with a current library membership.

You can join the library online and get eBooks, audiobooks, online magazines and newspapers for free straight away, or even take language and other courses.

Find out how to set up an account [here](#).



FREE CLOURING BOOKS TO DOWNLOAD

Free Colouring Books Downloadable from Cultural Institutions. From February 7, 2020, libraries, archives, and other cultural institutions around the world are sharing free coloring sheets and books based on materials in their collections. Please download, print, and share your favorites!

See: <http://library.nyam.org/colorourcollections/> for a selection.

BUS EIREANN: COVID19 MESSAGE

From Bus Éireann: COVID-19:

Let's all play our part

Dear Customer,



Covid-19 has already had a substantial impact on our daily lives. With the situation still evolving, I'd like to share what we at Bus Éireann are doing to support you, as well as all of our customers, our staff and community.

We will continue to follow the HSE health advice and guidance and implement the national strategy as it is advised, liaising with the Departments of Health, Transport, Education, and with the National Transport Authority, as necessary.

The safety of our staff, our customers and the wider public is paramount. We will continue to monitor and assess all risks in order to react and implement any changes necessary.

As announced by An Taoiseach, while services to our schools have been suspended under the School Transport Scheme until the 29th of March, public transport services will continue to operate as normal.

As a national provider of public transport, we are committed to providing the best possible service to the State. We will continue to serve our communities, hospitals and healthcare facilities to the best of our ability in the coming weeks and months. The Chief Medical Officer has advised that public transport does not constitute a mass gathering, however customers are asked to take full consideration of public health guidelines in relation to social distancing when boarding our fleet and waiting in our stations.

In terms of hygiene, we are acting on all of the advice given by Government and health authorities to ensure hygiene on our buses, coaches and at our facilities is maintained in line with the advice and guidance as provided by the HSE.

It is through the dedication and commitment of our loyal front line staff that we have been able to ensure that all Bus Éireann services are running as scheduled. We will, of course, keep you updated as the situation develops.

We ask all of our passengers to please follow the guidelines set out by the HSE and the Department of Health in relation to respiratory etiquette, hand hygiene and social distancing if using, or considering to use, public transport.

For a period of time, we are requesting customers not to use the front seats on either side of our long distance coaches, where these seats are directly behind the driver.

We also ask that, where possible you observe the social distance guidelines with our drivers and we encourage you therefore to purchase your ticket through our Ticket Vending Machines, use your TFI Leap Card, or buy online at www.buseireann.ie or www.expressway.ie

In the meantime, thank you for your continued support and, most especially, for your respect

for our front line team as they continue to support you and our local communities.

Stephen Kent

Chief Executive Officer
Bus Éireann

IRELANDS RESPONSE TO THE CRISIS

Age Friendly Ireland have collected a sample of nation-wide initiatives in response to the COVID19 crisis.

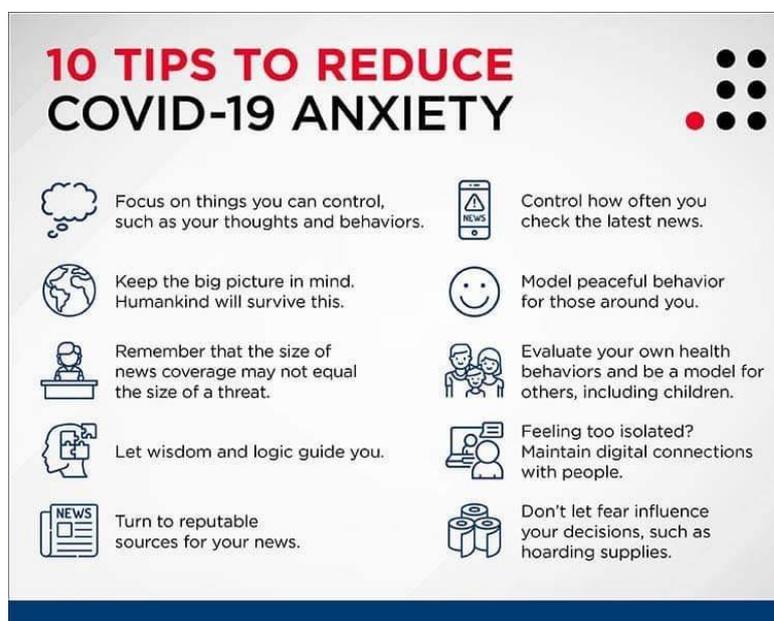
This list can be accessed [here](#).



MENTAL HEALTH

Mental Health Resources:

- List of Mental Health Supports from HSE.ie: <https://www2.hse.ie/services/mental-health/services-search/>
- Minding your Mental Health: <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/minding-your-mental-health-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak.html>
- Jigsaw Resource to Coping with the impact from Corona Virus: <https://jigsawonline.ie/young-people/coping-with-the-impact-of-coronavirus/>



Online and phone supports

Face-to-face interaction may be limited during this period. There are many online mental health resources and phone services that can help. Check [here](#).

