

Clare Community Response Helpline:

- Clare County Council takes lead in joining together local organisations to assist citizens during COVID-19
- Dedicated community support helpline to be available from Monday-Sunday (8am-8pm)

At the instigation of Minister Eoghan Murphy TD, a Covid-19 Community Response Forum has been put in place for each City/County and co-ordinated by the Local Authority in each case.

A dedicated community support helpline (1890 252943) has been established in Clare County Council to assist at risk members of the public in accessing non-emergency and non-medical supports and advice during the current public health emergency. The helpline and support email (covidsupport@clarecoco.ie) are operational seven-days-a-week from 8:00am to 8:00pm.

The confidential phone line service has been established by the new COVID-19 Clare Community Support Response Forum, which includes over a dozen agencies and organisations. The Helpline is focused primarily on ensuring that vulnerable members of the community or those living alone can access deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels. The role of the Forum is to ensure that there is a co-ordinated community response and to enable all voluntary statutory agencies to collaborate in support of our communities and particularly of our most vulnerable members.

Included in the COVID-19 Clare Community Response Forum are:

- Clare County Council
- Health Service Executive (HSE)
- An Garda Síochána
- An Post
- Community Welfare Service
- Community Champion
- Tusla and FRCs
- Clare Volunteer Centre
- Clare Local Development Company
- Red Cross
- Civil Defence
- GAA
- Irish Farmers Association (IFA)
- Public Participation Network
- Age Friendly Alliance Network
- Clare Local Link
- Citizen's Information
- Alone
- Migrant Forum
- Religious
- Other community, voluntary and sports representatives

The new phone line is just one aspect of the Forum's work. Its core aim is contributing to the community-wide effort to limit the spread of COVID-19. Clare County Council, through this group, will ensure that the wide variety of groups working across County Clare to assist those in need, will do so in an organised, collaborative and targeted way. The Council's COVID-19 Community Response Forum is there to ensure the very best use of the many resources assisting vulnerable persons with their daily needs at this unprecedented time, whether that is collecting medication, food shopping, social support and contact.

Pat Dowling, Chief Executive of Clare County Council, who is chairing the new Forum, explained, "There are a number of agencies currently doing excellent work in delivering care to older and vulnerable people in our communities. Some of these groups have already come together to plan for a local response. Other groups are currently operating independently of each other. Clare County Council's role is to provide a targeted, integrated and coordinated approach to the delivery of these much needed services to our more vulnerable citizens across the County during the COVID-19 pandemic."

Mayor of Clare, Cllr Clare Colleran Molloy, stated, "I was delighted to receive an update from many of these organisations on Monday of last week. I am heartened to see the positive response from many

more organisations and the Minister's endorsement of our response here in Clare. Clare County Council is ideally placed both statutorily and regionally to channel this great work and provide the governance structure in partnership with all stakeholders. This public health crisis has changed life for so many, and we are there to help with that change. Our own staff whose day-jobs have changed due to this crisis, are a key resource in the management and operation of this community support programme along with our partner agencies/groups."

Contact details of this new service is being promoted on www.clarecoco.ie, Social Media and Clare FM. An information leaflet including the new Freephone number and other information will be distributed around the county, particularly to vulnerable households, over the coming days.