



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP**

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and  
Local Government

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
Government**

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To: Chief Executives of all Local Authorities in  
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Cc: Leaders of all LAs in England

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[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

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Dear Chief Executives,

### **NHS Volunteer Responders**

As you will no doubt have seen, the NHS has had a fantastic response to its NHS Volunteer Responders scheme, with 750,000 people having signed up to support vulnerable people through this programme. This provides a rich seam of voluntary support which is there to help you in your community efforts at this time.

This volunteer resource is available to you as local authorities, working alongside other important local groups, to help complement the support you and health partners are giving to people in your local area who are shielding (that is, those who have been identified by the NHS as clinically vulnerable and who have been advised to remain at home and avoid all face to face contact), and also to help you support other people who are not shielding but are vulnerable for wider reasons including frailty, disability, pregnancy or social vulnerability.

#### *What can volunteers help with?*

NHS Volunteer Responders have signed up to carry out four types of task. Two of these tasks in particular may help complement your local offers of support to vulnerable people, including those who are shielded:

- 'Community Response' – which involves collecting shopping, medication or other essential supplies for someone who is self-isolating, and delivering these supplies to their home. This could act as a helpful complement to the food and pharmacy deliveries government is already coordinating for up to 1.5m people within the shielding group, who have been advised to remain at home and avoid all face to face contact.
- 'Check-in and Chat' – where volunteers provide short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness as a consequence of self-isolation. This could help as your local area looks to provide social contact with the shielded vulnerable – I propose that volunteers should be able to commit to a weekly call to support someone who might be feeling lonely.

#### *How can you arrange this support?*

To arrange support for those who are shielding, or otherwise vulnerable, in your area, you can deploy a volunteer via the app. You can do this by creating a 'referral' via [www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral](http://www.goodsamapp.org/NHSreferral) for individuals in need of help. Guidance on how to refer individuals is here: [https://www.goodsamapp.org/assets/pdf/Guide\\_for\\_Referrers.pdf](https://www.goodsamapp.org/assets/pdf/Guide_for_Referrers.pdf).

Anyone with a local authority or NHS email address can make a referral into the system; alternatively it is possible to make referrals by calling 0808 196 3382. The guidance also summarises how the app then works to identify available volunteers in your local area.

Being able to call on volunteers to help provide additional support to those who are shielding or vulnerable will, I hope, be welcomed in your local areas.

Thank you for all your efforts in recent weeks. I know your officers are working around the clock on our response to Covid-19. This is an immense national challenge, but local government is showing itself once again to be resilient, adaptable and capable of rising to the challenge. Please give my thanks and best wishes to all at your council.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Jenrick." The signature is written in a cursive style. Below the signature is a single horizontal line.

**RT HON ROBERT JENRICK MP**

