

COVID-19 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Press Release: 30 March 2020

COVID-19: National Initiative Launched to Link Thousands of Community Groups In Fight Against the Virus

Following the announcement of new COVID-19 emergency measures on Friday evening (27 March), a new national initiative will be launched today to link and support the work of thousands of community and voluntary organisations who are responding to meet the needs of the most vulnerable people in our communities, including people who are advised to ‘cocoon’.

The new initiative, COVID-19 Community Outreach (CCO) is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and will be coordinated by The Wheel, the national association of charities, and Irish Rural Link, the national network representing the interest of rural communities.

The aim of COVID-19 Community Outreach is to make sure that vulnerable people — such as older people, people with long-term medical conditions, and people with additional needs — have access to the highest quality information and support in the safety of their homes.

Commenting on the launch of COVID-19 Community Outreach, Seamus Boland, CEO of Irish Rural link said, “Across Ireland, thousands of community groups are mobilising to support people in their local areas. COVID-19 Community Outreach will link and support these organisations to make sure that their assistance is directed where it is most needed and that nobody is left behind.”

Deirdre Garvey CEO of The Wheel added, “We have already deployed a Community Champion in each of the 26 counties. As members of your Local Authority’s COVID-19 forum, the Community Champions will play a key role in coordinating local community supports.”

The role of the Community Campions is to:

- **Disseminate** accurate information throughout their local area, with a particular emphasis on hard-to-reach and vulnerable audiences;
- **Support** and further mobilise existing volunteer efforts, to ensure safe and effective non-medical services using best-practice guidelines;
- **Identify** emerging gaps in community services and communicate them promptly to relevant Government sources; and
- **Liase** with Local Authorities and relevant regional services to ensure that people recovering at home or returning from hospital receive necessary social supports.

“Charities, community and voluntary organisations that are currently supporting vulnerable people in the community, or are planning to do so, are advised to contact their local Community Champion as soon as possible,” said Deirdre Garvey.



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For contact details visit www.wheel.ie/covid-19-community-outreach.

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