

COVID-19 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

PRESS RELEASE: 21 April 2020

COVID-19: GROWING NEED FOR SOCIAL SUPPORTS AMONG 'COCOONED', ACCORDING TO COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS

There is a growing need for social supports among people who find themselves isolated because of the COVID-19 emergency measures. This is according to the 31 Community Champions who have been deployed across Ireland as part of the Government's Community Call initiative.

These Community Champions are working with local authorities and local community and voluntary groups to make sure that people who need help get it from trusted, experienced sources. The programme is being coordinated by The Wheel, the nation association of charities and Irish Rural Link, the national network for community groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas.

Seamus Boland, CEO of Irish Rural Link said: "While our Community Champions are still receiving requests for practical supports like food delivery, there have been more requests for social supports with people having to cocoon for longer, particularly among older people who find themselves isolated from their families and friends."

Examples of social support provided include:

- A Community Champion provided emotional support to a distressed man who reached out for help on the anniversary of his wife's death
- A Community Champion prepared cooked meals and gave emotional support to isolated older people over the Easter weekend
- A Community Champion arranged mobile phone credit for isolated older people to help them stay in contact with their family and friends

Deirdre Garvey, CEO of The Wheel, added, "Working with community organisations, state agencies and the local authorities, the Community Champions are identifying gaps in services and supports for our most vulnerable citizens. The physical and mental wellbeing of 'cocooned' people is now emerging as a key concern, and the Champions are currently liaising with local services to ensure that these needs are addressed and that nobody is left behind."

For details of the Community Champions see: www.wheel.ie/champions

-ENDS-



Stronger Charities.
Stronger Communities.



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Seamus Boland and Deirdre Garvey are available for interview. Contact Louise Lennon on M:086 106 9244 or Gert Ackermann on M:086 176 9287.

About The Wheel

The Wheel is Ireland's national association of charities, community and voluntary organisations, and social enterprises. With over 1,700 members, it is the largest representative body for the sector. Visit www.wheel.ie for more information.

About Irish Rural Link

Irish Rural Link is the national network for community groups in disadvantaged and marginalised rural areas. It represents their interests by highlighting problems, advocating appropriate policies, and sharing experiences and examples of good practice. Visit www.irishrurallink.ie for more information.



Media Contact

Gert Ackermann
Communications Manager

Mobile: 086 176 9287
Tel: 01-454 8727
Email: gert@wheel.ie