



Durham Community News - COVID-19 Update 14th May

This is a roundup of the latest information, advice and guidance regarding COVID-19.

We are here for you

All our staff across our Community Support, Volunteering and Food Durham teams are continuing to work from home and are here to support you with any information, advice and guidance you require.

Please contact us by email if we can help you; you can use our regular email addresses or email info@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk and your enquiry will be directed to a member of the team who can help you.

DCA COVID-19 Advice

We have a dedicated page on our website with links to sources of information for voluntary and community sector organisations including regular updates from NCVO and the Charity Commission, the latest information from Public Health, and local authority updates from Durham County Council and Durham Cyber team.

There are also links to our regularly updated guides which contain advice for volunteers, volunteer involving organisations and community buildings, response funding information and advice from the Information Commissioners Office on Data Protection and Volunteer Groups.

This page is continually updated with the latest information so please check back regularly.

Visit the page [here](#)

ACRE Updates

Getting Rural Britain back to work – Rural Coalition letter to George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Last week our umbrella body ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England) called on the government to show sensitivity to the needs and circumstances of rural communities when lifting the current COVID-19 restrictions. A letter signed by 13 organisations which make up the Rural Coalition, outlines considerations and practical recommendations for making sure the rural economy is helped to recover, whilst safeguarding the health of rural residents.

You can read the letter in full [here](#)

In the light of the new government announcements this week ACRE have produced some cursory thoughts on lifting COVID-19 restrictions in rural areas which can be read [here](#)

From DCA's perspective, we are in close contact with our community buildings and village halls. We know a lot of volunteer led management groups and activity groups have had to go into isolation and mothball activities from their centres in order to protect older volunteers and, in the face of lost revenue earned from community activities, have had to eke out resources so they can pay the bills and still be there when lockdown eases enough to re-open.

We have supported groups to get hold of emergency funding which has helped them to diversify with a creative range of emergency community support such as food and medicine deliveries, meals on wheels, remote shopping, counselling and advice over the phone, and on line activities for fraught families trying to keep kids occupied under lockdown. We are grateful to the County Durham Community Foundation for enabling us to provide micro grants to some newly emerging mutual aid organisations alongside specialist advice and support. We also continue to support participants of our National Lottery Community Fund funded Community Hubs Development Programme to access seed funding supporting organisational development plans.

Whatever happens, we are acutely aware that all organisations, including our own, are having to think ahead and plan for whatever the often mentioned "new normal" is going to be. It will mean different things for different communities, especially those who are furthest from mainstream services, such as supermarkets and transport.

We also know that some of the rural areas have sprung a creative dynamic of their own with respect to mutual aid groups of local volunteers, stepping in to help out, with village shops and small local services stepping up as distribution points and places where people can get hold of information, advice and help. There are some important and smart lessons we can all learn from the contributions which people have made in small local communities.

We'll be continuing to provide whatever support we can, most especially for people who are volunteering, groups who need a steer and some help, and community centres, community spaces and the organisations which are providing anchors for people who are struggling, isolated or in need of support.

We'd also like to learn from you, and we'll share our learning with you to help you to plan and be ready for whatever comes next. We can help with support and advice for trustees, recovery and financial planning.

Jo Laverick, Executive Director of DCA says:

"It's sounding a bit tired now, but the expression which has been used so much about this crisis being a marathon and not a sprint has never seemed truer. We are all tired, but we are still running this marathon together and we can support each other in getting ready for when we start meeting again."

COVID-19 Response Funding Updates

There are a number of funders and organisations who are offering COVID-19 response funding to voluntary and community sector organisations.

Please note these funds are changing constantly and often have very short deadlines; we are updating our funding information several times a week to reflect this so please check our website on a regular basis.

Read our COVID-19 Emergency Funding Guide here [add link](#)

New funding opportunities this week include Hadrian Trust, Youth Endowment Fund COVID-19 Grant and UK Tampon Tax Fund.

Volunteering Advice

Our Volunteering team have produced two guides with relation to COVID-19:

- [COVID-19 Advice for Volunteers](#) provides help for those wishing to volunteer during the pandemic including advice on staying safe and information on Safeguarding and DBS.
- [COVID-19 Guide for Volunteer Involving Groups](#) provides advice on how organisations or informal groups can respond to the increase in spontaneous volunteering whilst maintaining good practice standards.

We are continuing to offer good practice advice and guidance around volunteer recruitment and management and still operating our free volunteer brokerage service. If your organisation is looking for volunteers or you have any queries around volunteer management please contact: volunteering@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

Safeguarding Advice and Training

As a partner in the Safer Culture North East project we have created with our partners some easy to read Safeguarding factsheets for the sector, designed as brief introductions to the subject matter with links showing where to get further information for people and organisations who are new to safeguarding and having to respond quickly whilst facing enormous challenges.

These factsheets are aimed at volunteers, trustees, community groups and those employees and volunteers new to delivering services online. The factsheets are available [here](#)

We are also running a free online training session 'Understanding Safeguarding for Voluntary and Community Organisations' next Tuesday 19th May from 10.00am – 11.30am. To book your place please click [here](#)

This event is part of *Safer Culture North East*, a partnership between Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees, Connected Voice, Durham Community Action, Northumberland CVA and VONNE, funded jointly by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and the National Lottery Community Fund.



Food Durham Update

Calling all farmers, land managers and advisors, people working in food or rural businesses, community groups and NGOs, people working in central and local government, and academics!

A recent Food Farming and Countryside Commission [poll](#) found just 9% of Britons want everything to go back to how it was before coronavirus.

But what should change and what can we learn from lockdown? How could food, farming and the countryside be 'built back better' in practice?

At Food Durham, we would like to see policy change at government level as well as more practical support for local food businesses that helps people continue to buy local, sustainable food but what do you think?

Please follow the link [here](#) to complete the survey:

This survey should take 15-25 minutes. **Please complete the survey by Tuesday 19th May.**

All information is correct at time of publication but guidance is regularly changing so please regularly check our [website](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) pages for the most up to date information.