

Residents encouraged to reach out early for support

These are difficult times for many, so Dorset Council is working with Citizens Advice to encourage anyone struggling financially because of Covid-19 in Dorset to seek help before they reach crisis point.

The council is signposting to support at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out, including posters and social media templates which can be used to help spread the word.

We wonder if you could share information about this campaign with your parishioners?

Whether it's through your own website, a newsletter, social media or word-of-mouth, your trusted voice will help the campaign reach those Dorset residents who are struggling.

For many people, this will be the first time they have experienced financial difficulties, or a friend or family member is finding things tough right now. They may feel unsure who to turn to, or just need some advice about which bill to pay, or what to do next.

Dorset Citizens Advice has a team of specialist and experienced advisers waiting at the end of the phone to offer free, confidential and impartial advice.

Here are just a few of the things Citizens Advice are currently talking to people in Dorset about:

- paying the rent or mortgage
- avoiding eviction
- redundancy and finding work
- furlough
- accessing benefits
- paying council tax and other bills
- managing loan or credit card repayments
- free school meals
- changing career

Contact Dorset Citizens Advice on Freephone 0800 144 8848 (text phone 0800 144 8884) or visit www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out to see the support available.

All advice is free, confidential and impartial.

Mental health and relationships

You can also find information about mental health and relationship support on the web pages.

Covid-19 has changed life for everyone. For some people, these changes can be difficult to cope with and can have a significant impact on mental health. Some people are also struggling with their relationships, or finding things at home particularly difficult. The Reaching Out webpage links to a range of support and advice.

Visit www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out