

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL.**

**CABINET**

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Cllr Graham Breeze**

**REPORT TITLE: Welfare Call Monitoring (COVID 19 – Response)**

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**REPORT FOR: Information**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To describe the process in Powys to support those in our communities who are at the highest risk of severe illness if they contract COVID-19 (**‘the Shielded Group’**) and our most vulnerable residents.

**2. Background**

- 2.1 On the 23rd March 2020 the UK Government took the unprecedented step to try and limit the spread of COVID-19 and announced that residents with serious underlying health conditions would need to “shield” this meant that many of our residents were unable to leave their home and unable to get the basic needs of food and prescriptions.
- 2.2 **‘The Shielded Group’** were identified by the NHS and have been advised by letter to self-isolate. On 25<sup>th</sup> March, Powys received its first data from the Welsh Government, identifying 538 residents as being in the shielding group. Since then another 16 updates have been received from Welsh Government as further health conditions were added to the underlying health conditions list and GP’s identified more patients bringing the total to 5,766.
- 2.3 In addition to this group a further 4,538 residents identified as vulnerable from data held in Social Care, Housing and Customer Services were also included in welfare calls so that we could offer the same means of support to them (not including WG food parcels).
- 2.4 The role of the local authority is and has been vital in supporting our vulnerable residents throughout this challenging period. We have acted as the first point of contact for these individuals who have been concerned about their own individual situation and have sought help from us to meet their needs.

- 2.5 The delivery of that support has been a collective effort between many services and individuals within the authority as well our voluntary sector (PAVO and many other volunteers).

### **3. How we made contact**

- 3.1 Each local authority received a data set of letter recipients within their area. The dataset contained residents name, address, telephone number (if included) and Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN).
- 3.2 The letter sent from Welsh Government to the shielded group asked them to rely on family, friends and other local support networks to help with anything they may need during the period that they were being asked to isolate. If the shielded person did not have anyone to rely on for help, they were asked to contact their local authority. The contact details for Powys was the council's main reception line number. Calls are received in and made out to our shielding and vulnerable residents.
- 3.3 The Goss ICM Platform, is our Customer Relationship Management system (CRM) this is used as the database for the residents' record. Through an integrated call script, the call advisor is able to easily navigate through a list of questions, which dependent on the answer provides an outcome for that resident and sends prompts automatically via e-mail to other council services or PAVO. The system also gathers data on whether the resident would like to receive a weekly or fortnightly call back from us.
- 3.4 Those residents that are vulnerable and known to Social Care are contacted by Social Care staff, these are recorded on the WCCIS case management system. If they are any changes in relation to WG food boxes these are passed to Customer Services to update the WG food parcel database.

### **4. The support offered for those in the Shielded Group and vulnerable residents**

- 4.1 There is a multi-faceted offer of support to those that are shielded and vulnerable.

#### **Welsh Government food boxes**

Those in the Shielded Group who are unable to rely on family, friends or local community support are provided with a basic package of food and household essentials, delivered direct to their door each week by a food service supplier.

### **Emergency food parcel**

Those in the Shielded Group that require a WG food parcel but do not have enough food until they receive their first delivery, were asked whether they would like their details passed onto PAVO, if they did an automatic e-mail request was made to PAVO requesting that they contact the individual to provide the necessary support.

### **Help with getting food**

For those that had not yet received a food parcel or have no other means of securing food, a service request was automatically e-mailed to PAVO who are able to provide a food shopping service.

### **Help with getting medicines/prescriptions**

For those that had no means of securing a delivery of prescriptions then a service request was automatically e-mailed to PAVO who are able to provide a prescription collection and delivery service.

### **Befriending Services Social contact / wellbeing support**

For those residents that are now socially excluded or have no other support network, a befriending service was offered via PAVO.

### **Daily Living Support**

Residents are asked whether they need support with their daily living, if they do this instigates a service request to the council's Assist team who will contact the resident to discuss their requirements further and put in place additional support should it be needed.

### **Council call back**

To ensure contact was maintained with our residents during this time the council is offering a weekly or fortnightly call back service for those that want it.

### **Councillor call back**

The resident is also asked whether they would like their details passed to their local councillor so that their councillor can make a call back to them.

### **Safeguarding Concerns**

Any safeguarding concerns that are brought to the attention of the call handler are followed up with the appropriate team either Assist or Childrens Front door.

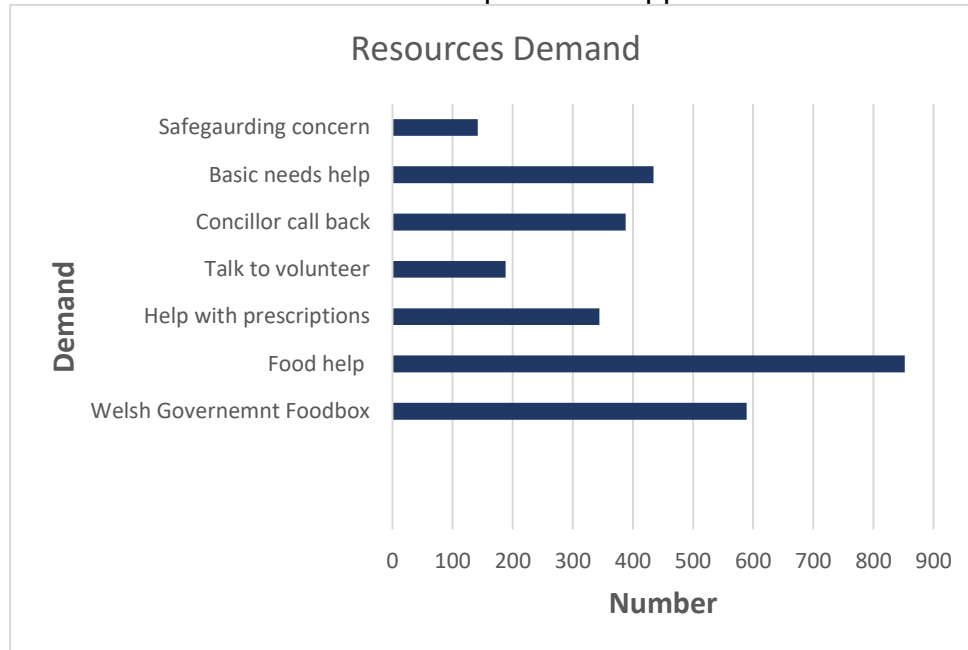
## **5. Data Sharing**

- 5.1 The call script covers questions to individuals asking whether they agree for their information to be shared with various organisations who need that information in order for them to provide the support the individual requires.
- 5.2 The approach to data sharing, data security and information governance has been considered by the Data Protection Officer for Wales. The Information Commissioner has assured the NHS and Government Departments that she cannot envisage a situation where she would act against a health and care professional using or sharing data to deliver care and support, which is the clear priority in this health emergency.

## **6. Welfare Call Resources**

- 6.1 Currently there are approximately 10 redeployed staff from a number of services making welfare calls to shielded and vulnerable residents, any calls received being dealt with by the Customer Services team. The initial call back team making contact for the first time consisted of a much larger group of staff.
- 6.2 Calls are also being made from social care teams and housing, for those residents identified as vulnerable.
- 6.3 In total 18,383 calls have now been made or received. With 10,304 records on the CRM database.

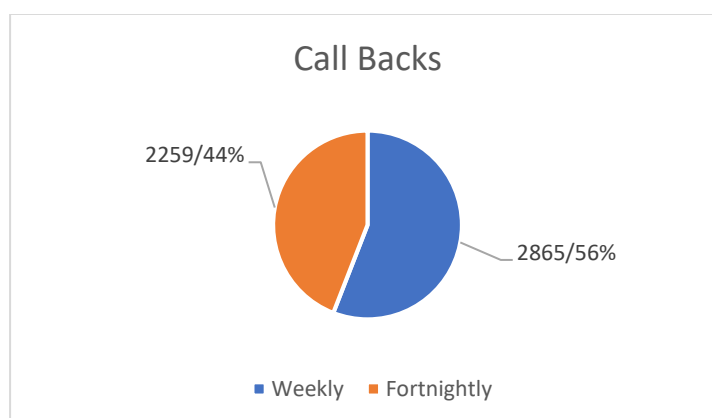
6.4 The chart below illustrates the requests of support from our residents.



Data up to 13/6/20

6.5 915 requests have been made for Welsh Government food boxes; this is 15.8% of those residents classed as shielding. 326 residents have since requested to be removed from the list. Leaving 589 residents (10.2%) still require a food box.

6.6 The chart below illustrates how many of our residents require a weekly or fortnightly call back.



6.6 The residents have been overwhelmed in the support that has been offered to them. Below are a number of examples of compliments received. -

*"what an excellent service you are providing by going that extra mile to ensure residents are being looked after. All my friends are so happy that you take time to take time to listen to people and try and help them out even if its trivial. Please tell senior staff within PCC that this is an excellent service and everyone making these phone calls is a credit to the authority. Fantastic service".*

*Please thank everyone involved with the welfare calls because this is an unbelievable service provided by PCC. Please tell all the callers that everyone really appreciates the time they take to discuss any questions people may have. Excellent service, well done and thank you.*

*wants to pass on Congratulations to PCC on a wonderful service and appreciate all calls from PCC Welfare.*

*wishes to express how grateful she is for the Welfare Calls.*

*wants to pass on how wonderful she thinks we all are in Powys County Council and pass on her thanks for all the help during the pandemic.*

*Thank you so much, I do not know what I would do without your wonderful support and guidance,*

## **7. Next Steps**

- 7.1 On the 4th June the Welsh Government announced that "shielding" was to be extended until the 16<sup>th</sup> August 2020, therefore the support needed to our residents will continue at least up until that date.
- 7.2 As the council starts to move into its recovery phase and some services begin to get back to business as usual it will be key that we have the resources to continue to support our resident's.
- 7.3 Currently discussions are underway with PAVO to recruit volunteers that are able to work with the council to continue this service. Expressions of interest are currently being sort; full training will be given to ensure they meet GDPR and cyber security requirements and that they can use our systems.
- 7.4 The Welsh Government has asked councils whether they would be willing / able to assume responsibility for the provision and delivery of food parcels to shielding individuals as the Welsh Government contract is due to end on the 7th July.
- 7.5 The majority of councils are not in favour of taking on this responsibility because of concerns about capacity and the complexity that establishing the scheme locally would involve.

- 7.6 Consideration is also being given to some kind of means testing to ensure that only those that have insufficient economic means receive them, adding an administrative burden to the process.

**8. Legal Implications**

None identified

**9. Resource Implications**

The monthly ongoing cost of providing welfare calls is a £10,592. The funding of the staff is mainly through base budget from various areas of the council, with some staff funded through the generation of income. Staff are carrying out their substantive posts when not covering welfare calls.

**10. Recommendation**

For information only

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