

[Home](#) » [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) » Suffolk Advice and Support Service

Suffolk Advice and Support Service

Find out about the different support services for Suffolk residents and information for professionals.



Get **free** professional advice in confidence on a range of things that you might need some help with.



Suffolk Collective

Suffolk partners and agencies
working together

The Collaborative Communities COVID-19 Board

Call us to have a chat about:

your mortgage or credit cards

rent arrears or other debts

COVID-19 related concerns and what it means for you and/or your family

access to food

one off grants for things such as:

white goods

fuel vouchers

other unforeseen expenses

Helpline: 0800 068 3131

Monday to Friday

9am to 5pm.

As part of the response to the COVID-19 outbreak there has been a joint response between a number of statutory and voluntary sector partners co-ordinated by the Collaborative Communities Board. There is a clear need to provide ongoing support to the Suffolk population both in response to Covid-19 and to meet wider support needs.

The Suffolk Advice and Support Service will bring together five **essential** areas of work.

Single Point of Access

Local Welfare Assistance Scheme

Food banks

Suffolk InfoLink

The Warm Handover

[Download Suffolk Advice and Support Service diagram](#) (JPG, 25KB)

Guide on benefits, housing and support in Suffolk

[Download COVID19 and benefit and housing factsheet](#) (PDF, 615KB).

Single Point of Access

Single point of access to advice and support services is available for **all** residents in Suffolk.

The telephone number is **0800 068 3131**. Calls received will be triaged by someone who can help you.

They will either provide you with the advice and guidance you need or will signpost you to a support agency in your local area who will be on hand to have a chat with you.

This may include uploading your details onto the Warm Handover digital platform that member organisations can use to send referrals in a data secure way. Read more about the Warm Handover platform below.

Local Welfare Assistance Scheme

Any organisations working with people who are facing severe financial hardship due to COVID-19 can refer into the Local Welfare Assistance Scheme.

The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme primarily provides household furniture and white goods, plus fuel (electricity and gas top ups) and supermarket vouchers to address identified need. The Local Welfare Assistance Scheme does not accept applications from members of the public. You must be referred into the scheme by a gateway partner.

[Find a gateway partner from the list of organisations](#) who can refer into the Local Welfare Assistance scheme.

Contact localwelfareassistance@suffolk.gov.uk

Download the current [Local Welfare Assistance Scheme guidance](#) (PDF, 277KB)

[Referral organisations](#)  (online form)

Food banks

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a continued increase in the use of food banks across Suffolk. The network has supplied enough food, on average, to feed 3,738 people per week.

From the data collected by the FareShare Scheme we have seen an increase of 238% in the amount of food being given to families across Suffolk over the past 12 months. We predict that demand will increase further as national policies and schemes change.

The independent network of food banks is being supported via the Collaborative Communities Board and have received additional food and non-food items to support their own provision.

Whilst the need to ensure they have sufficient supplies to meet the needs of their local communities is paramount; further work is being developed with the food banks to better understand the dependencies and complexities of food bank usage.

[Find a food bank that accepts self referrals.](#)

Suffolk InfoLink



Suffolk InfoLink provides information about a wide range of organisations across Suffolk.

Information is grouped into four **key** areas:

Help for adults about local advice services and organisations to help you live independently

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health information, advice, and support services

Suffolk Local Offer for children and young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND)

Families and Community directory of childcare, local groups, organisations, and activities

[Visit InfoLink website](#)

The Warm Handover



The Warm Handover enables fast referrals between support organisations, enabling those finding themselves facing difficulties due to COVID-19 to get access to the support they need quickly.

The Warm Handover is being extended to include more support organisations that are members of the Suffolk Advice and Support Service.

[Check out the list of organisations who are signed up to the warm handover scheme](#)

The Suffolk Information Partnership manages this secure, online referral process to support those in need to help them access services that they may not be able to on their own.

If the individual would like to be referred to another organisation in the Scheme, or the practitioner feels it is in their best interests, their personal details and support needs can be safely and swiftly passed on to other partner organisations who will get in touch with the client to offer support. The process, which means that the client only needs to tell their story once, is underpinned by an Information Sharing Agreement that outlines the responsibilities of each partner and a Privacy Statement.

[Is your organisation interested in joining the Warm Handover Referral Scheme?](#)

[Are you a member of staff within an organisation already using Warm Handovers and would like information and guidance to help you?](#)

Please note that the referral form is only for use by organisations and is not for the public. If you wish to refer yourself or a family member to a service offered by the partners in the scheme, please contact the most appropriate organisation listed on the [Partners' page](#).

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