

FENLAND DISTRICT COUNCIL

PRESS RELEASE

27 January 2021

Council secures funding to boost COVID-19 work

Fenland District Council has successfully secured almost £100,000 from the Government to expand its ongoing work to support those most at risk from COVID-19.

The Council has been awarded a £96,903 grant from the Government's £25million Community Champions scheme to help deliver a wide range of measures to protect those most at risk – building trust, communicating accurate health information, and ultimately helping to save lives.

The funding has been awarded to 60 councils and voluntary groups across England with plans to reach groups such as older people, disabled people, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds, who according to the latest evidence are more likely to suffer long-term impacts and poor outcomes from COVID-19.

In Fenland, the funding will be used to recruit and train up to ten Community Champions to reflect the different community languages spoken in the area. They will work with the Council and voluntary and community partners to enhance communications with these groups and deliver outreach support across the district.

The programme includes increased language and translation support, additional information, advice and guidance, phone calls for people who are digitally excluded, as well as the delivery of food and medical supplies to harder to reach communities.

The funding will also help to tackle misinformation about the virus and the COVID-19 vaccination in these groups to help ensure they stay well-informed.

Many different Fenland communities will be supported through the work, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, people with learning/physical disabilities, as well as faith groups, with the Community Champions being drawn from these groups to share accurate health information with their neighbours, networks, and wider community.

Cllr Andrew Lynn, the Council's Portfolio Holder responsible for Community Safety, said: "As the pandemic has progressed, we have continually learned more about its impact on communities and worked hard to ensure that our outreach work, engagement and communications regarding COVID-19 are appropriate to our communities and reach those most at risk from the virus.

"There are many more initiatives that we would like to develop and accelerate, so I'm delighted that we've been able to secure this funding to help make this possible. It will make a huge difference to our communities, ensuring we can continue to engage and support our most vulnerable residents during this challenging time, and in the future."

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said: "It is vital that everyone has access to accurate and up to date information about COVID-19. False information about COVID-19 vaccines could cost lives. Today's funding will help councils and community groups expand some of the excellent work already underway and reach out to their communities to ensure

they have the information they need and get their questions answered. Ultimately this funding will help save lives.”

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For more information contact Fenland District Council press office on 01354 622226