

Sway Welfare Aid Group

50 YEARS OF LOCAL PEOPLE HELPING LOCAL PEOPLE

Covid-19 Emergency

Plans to celebrate our 50th birthday, like so many other anniversaries this year, have been put on hold during this national emergency. Sway Welfare Aid Group was formed 50 years ago to react to a then emergency resulting from extreme cold weather combined with a severe outbreak of Flu. Covid-19 is a grim reminder of the importance of our work over the years. There will be a time in the future when we are able to celebrate but meanwhile SWAG continues to work to the best of our abilities helping Sway residents, particularly the most vulnerable individuals and families, who are particularly at risk. Clearly our services have been significantly affected, in part due to the clear government directives regarding increasing restrictions on movement and the need for as many people as possible to self-isolate to protect both themselves and other members of the community. This has significantly impacted the number of volunteers that work on behalf of SWAG many of whom, either due to the age restrictions mandated by the Government or underlying medical conditions, have been asked to self-isolate. Our priority is to protect both our volunteers and clients and our good wishes go to all of them during this exceptional crisis.

During this emergency, our services have had to change and the following is a brief update on what we can do and unfortunately what we are currently unable to provide:

Lunch Club

Lunch club is now suspended for the foreseeable future in accordance with the regulations banning group gatherings. Our volunteers had hoped to provide a home meal delivery service but the continued shortage of basic cooking ingredients, particularly flour, in supermarkets has made this difficult. However, we have been able to deliver some home baked goods and Easter eggs. We remain in regular contact with our members and help as much as possible if only to provide that much needed telephone voice during these periods of social isolation.

Medical Transport

We continue to provide medical transport but only for urgent cases. Please do not ask us to arrange routine trips for dental, opticians or other such non-essential appointments. Our volunteers are no longer permitted to enter hospitals to escort clients who have mobility issues – we can only provide a door to door service. In these cases the client will need to be accompanied by either a close family member or carer. We are also requesting that clients, in addition to our drivers, wear disposable face masks that we will provide, at all times during the journey. Should you require medical transport please continue to call us on 01590 681 500 and select option 1.

Prescription Collection

We have introduced a prescription collection service for those Sway residents who are unable to visit the local pharmacy due to self-isolation or mobility issues. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to always collect medication in a timely fashion and can only promise our best endeavours on a case by case basis. Should you need urgent collection of prescription items please call us on 01590 681 500 option 1.

Emergency Grants

In the exceptional circumstances we are currently facing, the Trustees of SWAG have “ring fenced” an emergency grant reserve to enable us to help those individuals and families within Sway who are in severe financial difficulty due to this emergency. Our primary focus is to help those people, many of whom may be self-employed or lost their jobs, who are unable to qualify for income support guarantees or enhanced benefit payments that have recently been introduced by the government. This reserve is clearly not inexhaustible and will be used prudently by the Trustees on a first come basis. We also reserve the right to terminate this scheme at any time particularly if new government initiatives are introduced. You must live in Sway and not be eligible for other forms of emergency income support to qualify. If you are currently suffering a severe financial crisis and feel that you may qualify please visit our website www.swaghants.org.uk/covid.html or call us on 01590 681 500 and select option 2. We will then send you a confidential application form by email to enable your request to be considered.

SWAG is also now offering grants in order to support local NHS and care workers during the current crisis. These are for NHS workers living in Sway and also care home and domiciliary care staff who work in Sway looking after our elderly and vulnerable residents.

Grants will be given as reimbursement for various expenses in cases of financial hardship. If this could be of help to you please telephone 01590 681 500 and choose option 2.

Hardship Grants

We continue to offer our usual Hardship grants for those individuals and families who encounter an unexpected financial crisis not necessarily related to the Covid-19 Emergency.

In addition to our financial grants we are also the local village agents for the Lymington Food Bank and can arrange emergency food and other household essential deliveries.

Should you feel that you need and believe that you may be eligible for a SWAG Financial Hardship grant or require a food parcel please contact us either by email at info@swaghants.org.uk or call us on 01590 681 500 and select Option 2 to speak with one of our Duty Trustees.

Volunteer Drivers Needed

We would welcome additional volunteers to undertake driving and other duties. If you are interested and want more information please call us on 01590 681 500 and select Option 2 or email us on the info@swaghants.org.uk with your contact details.