



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

TITLE **Coronavirus (COVID-19) : Support for the Third Sector and Volunteering**

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BY **Jane Hutt AM, Deputy Minister and Chief Whip**

Our communities are facing unprecedented challenges as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. There are many charities, community groups and other third sector organisations dealing with the impact of this virus. Volunteers across Wales are playing a vital role in enabling people to stay at home helping us protect the NHS and social care and save lives. We know more people want to play their part and we are working across sectors with Third Sector Support Wales, Local Authorities and NHS Wales to make this happen.

In response to the pressures on the third sector and the increasing numbers of people who want to volunteer I have announced a **Welsh Government Third Sector Covid-19 Response Fund** worth £24 million. This will support three distinct areas of activity:

- **Helping charities and third sector organisations financially through the crisis** – by providing direct financial support for third sector organisations which need help to get through this crisis – by paying their bills and easing cash-flow (Third Sector Resilience Fund);
- **Helping more people volunteer and volunteering services** – By supporting third sector organisations in the community who are co-ordinating the massive volunteer response we have seen across Wales; helping them to pay the out of pocket expenses of their volunteers (Voluntary Services Emergency Fund); and
- **Strengthening the essential Third Sector infrastructure** – by enabling our funding of Third Sector Support Wales to temporarily increase its own capacity to support the sector, including the development of the Volunteering Wales platform (Third Sector Infrastructure Enabling Fund).

I have also agreed to allow temporarily the purchase or replacement of equipment to support the COVID-19 response through the **Community Facilities Programme**. This is a

capital grant scheme to improve the local facilities which play a very important role in supporting people.

We know that the third sector is moving quickly to respond to this emergency situation and that a number of trusts and foundations are coming forward offering funding to support this enormous effort. Through [Third Sector Support Wales](#) we established the [Funding Wales](#) platform to provide a funding search portal to help charities, community groups or social enterprises find grants and local finance opportunities from local, national and international sources.

This now includes a new [coronavirus funding category](#) to bring together funds that are directly supporting the sector in this time of need. We are in a fast moving situation and new funding sources and more detail on existing sources are being released daily. The [Funding Wales](#) platform is being updated regularly so that organisations can see in one place as many funding opportunities as possible. As of 3 April, there are 10 different funds focused on COVID-19 listed on [Funding Wales](#), including the Wales Coronavirus Resilience Fund from the Community Foundation Wales, Charities Aid Foundation and Pen y Cymoedd Wind Farm Community Fund. We would encourage trusts and foundations to use [Funding Wales](#) to promote their funds to third sector organisations across Wales.

In Wales, unlike other parts of the UK, we have a unified platform to recruit volunteers through [Volunteering Wales](#). This platform provides opportunities for volunteers and a shop window for those seeking to recruit volunteers. [Volunteering Wales](#) allows people to register as a volunteer and search for volunteering opportunities in their local area, including [COVID-19 specific opportunities](#). As of 1 April there are over 50 volunteering opportunities listed on Volunteering Wales specifically dedicated to COVID-19 support. We are working across sectors to develop a co-ordinated approach to volunteering that is right for Wales and Welsh communities.

There are over 21,000 people registered on Volunteering Wales, with around 10,000 registrations in March. All of these volunteers have been emailed the specific COVID-19 opportunities. We are encouraging those who wish to volunteer to join a local volunteer organisation and register their interest at [Volunteering Wales](#).

For updates on any or all of the support outlined in this statement please refer to the Welsh Government website [Covid-19 pages](#).

Key references

Webpage

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) : support for the third sector](#)

Press Release

[Volunteers – how to help, thank you, and stay safe](#)

Video Message

[Video message from Deputy Minister and Chief Whip](#)

Press Release

[Multi-million pound boost to support volunteers and Wales' most vulnerable](#)

Webpage

[How can I volunteer?](#)

Webpage

[Volunteering during the coronavirus pandemic](#)