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Leader of Torrige District Council seeks to reassure residents and those experiencing hardship - ahead of second National Lockdown



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The Leader of Torrige District Council, Councillor Ken James, has today sought to reassure residents that those experiencing hardship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic shouldn't be afraid to come forward and seek help. Torrige Council

has supported many government initiatives to distribute funding to those affected including business support grants and signposting to other schemes but there are also locally operated schemes that people may not be aware of.

Councillor James said:

“Nobody could have predicted the impact covid-19 would have on everybody’s lives both financially and on people’s health and mental wellbeing. While we have well publicised national schemes and a local scheme to help with Council Tax arrears further support is also just a phone call away through a fund being administered by our partners at Encompass”

Encompass is a registered charity working across Northern Devon to prevent and reduce homelessness and the impacts of poverty and financial hardship. The fund was set up with financial support from Devon County Council and is designed to support families who are suffering immediate financial hardship as a result of Covid-19. It can be used to provide support for essential basic needs such as food, personal or household items, repairs and even gas and electricity costs.

Councillor James went on to say:

“The governments extension to the furlough scheme and other measures is very welcome as we enter yet another period of uncertainty for businesses and families. Whilst we have been fortunate in the low Covid-19 infection rate in Torridge the financial impact of lost business and family income has been significant for many. For some this may also be the first time they have found themselves in this situation and in need of help. Anyone feeling they need support should contact the specially trained advisors at Encompass who will be able to signpost them quickly to help and assistance either from the government, Torridge Council hardship schemes or the hardship funding set up for Covid-19. There is no stigma attached to anyone needing help and in the current circumstances this could happen to any of us.”

Encompass can be reached by calling them on 01271 371499 and by selecting the “Community Helpline” option – Monday to Friday between 9.30am-3pm. Their list of expertise includes advice on welfare benefits, money, housing, but also mental health support from mind.

There are also extensive support pages on Torridge Council’s webpages here <https://www.torridge.gov.uk/coronavirus> and Devon County Council website here <https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/support-for-people-and-families/> covering support right across the County.

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