

Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP
Chairman, Health and Social Care Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

31st March 2020

Dear Jeremy,

Thank you for your kind invitation to the LGA to provide evidence to the inquiry into preparations for coronavirus. During the evidence session I was asked by Dean Russell MP if people who have signed up to county council volunteering schemes should now transfer to NHS volunteering schemes and I am writing to provide further information on this point.

The response to the national NHS Volunteer Responders (NHS VRs) has been impressive and clear evidence that many thousands of people really want to help their communities at this difficult time. It is important to emphasise that the NHS VRs scheme is intended to fill the gaps that cannot be filled by locally coordinating community support, such as the county council volunteering scheme we discussed. It is important that it does not detract from existing local arrangements between councils and their voluntary and community sector partners to provide crucial services to vulnerable residents stuck at home. Volunteers who support local council-run and other existing schemes provide a vital and ongoing service and should be encouraged to continue.

We understand that currently volunteers available through the GoodSam app can only be used to support the medically shielded group of people. We have asked that this should urgently be extended to people who cannot leave home and do not have access to other support through neighbours, family or friends.

The LGA continues to work with NHS England, NHS Improvement, DCMS, MHCLG and the Royal Volunteering Service to find a way of ensuring that volunteers registering through the NHS VRs scheme can be routed through to councils, Local Resilience Forums and local voluntary and community service coordinating bodies. By doing so, we hope that we will be able to build a clear picture of the voluntary capacity in local areas and identify where extra capacity offered through the NHS scheme could help to plug any gaps.

I hope that this information is helpful to the Committee, and if the LGA can be of further assistance, please do get in touch with [aXXXXXXXXX](#)

Best wishes,

Sarah Pickup
Deputy Chief Executive
Local Government Association