

Media Release
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Devon agrees extra £8.5m package of support to help county deal with Covid-19 over Winter

Devon County Council has agreed a further £8.5 million package of support to local communities to deal with the ongoing impacts of COVID-19 over the Winter and beyond.

The package includes over £5m of extra support for schools, colleges and the University of Exeter, £1.5m additional support for outbreak management in care settings, a £1m fund for voluntary sector groups to support local community projects aimed at supporting vulnerable people, as well as schemes aimed at young people and rough sleepers.

The new measures are the result of bids from a wide range of agencies and groups with ideas for how best to help deal with issues still affecting individuals and communities as a result of the pandemic which were invited by the council in September.

The funding is part of the county's £20m share of a national Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) given to every local authority to help them to manage the pandemic and its impact on local communities.

Previous COMF funding in Devon has been spent on vital elements of the response such as local community testing facilities and contact tracing; infection prevention and control in care homes and other settings; vaccination outreach support; support for youth services, early years and care settings; public mental health support; rough sleeper support as well as on targeted communication and marketing activity.

Steve Brown, Devon's Director of Public Health, said:

"The funding has provided the infrastructure, the building blocks on which Devon's initial response and ongoing management has developed.

"Now, with winter ahead, the funding will provide additional support in communities to meet further challenges.

"Coronavirus is still very much with us, with case rates rising again in Devon this week – a reminder to us that we are not through this.

"Add to that the pressures associated with winter and the strain already acute across the health and social care sector, and we need to ensure that our schools and colleges, care homes and communities have the funding they need to see us through."