

First 'Foodbank Thursday' success for new response team

The 'Area 6 Covid Response Team' is providing vital help to boost support for vulnerable people living in isolated areas in and around Hillcrest and Hensingham in Whitehaven, which is some of the largest residential areas in the town.

Ryan Taylor, Senior Project Manager, is leading the response team.

He said:

I was approached to lead the team by John Murphy who is doing the same in Cleator Moor and I was keen to help. We have a lot of amazing volunteers offering their time, so the main priority is ensuring that we organise and coordinate them in the best way, to get the right support to the right people as quickly as we can.

A big thank you to the people helping us make this a more positive situation for those living in our area. Those of us from Sellafield Ltd are also very lucky to have the support of our management, who are giving us time to support the community.

Area 6 covers Hillcrest, Hensingham, Richmond, Red Lonning, Inkerman and surrounding estates in the Whitehaven area.

The service offered includes food shopping and deliveries, pharmacy collections, a telephone befriending service, utilities support, dog walking and even gardening.

The team had an overwhelming response to their first 'Foodbank Thursday' event this week, which saw food parcels being collected from doorsteps and taken to a new collection hub in Rascals nursery at Red Lonning.

Foodbank Thursday

Jessica Ward, Programme Manager, has allocated teams to focus on specific 'zones', ensuring everyone has access to support if they need it.

She said:

The first thing we did was devise a strategy to set-up the group of volunteers as quickly as possible. Within 24 hours we had split the area into 6 zones, allocating a lead to each.

Each team now has their own Whatsapp groups and are providing a

vital service to those who are in need of a helping hand. Its really motivational to see such a caring and proactive community of people working to turn a difficult situation into one that is more positive for local people.

Local Councillors Allan Forster, Mike Hawkins and Chris Hays are also backing the efforts.

Cllr Forster said:

This is a hugely populated area of Whitehaven and we're keen to do all we can to ensure vulnerable and isolated residents get the help they need.

We have been overwhelmed by offers of support and are very grateful to our volunteers offering time and skills to help their neighbours during this testing time.