

Dear SAS registered organisation

31<sup>st</sup> March 2020

## Re: Coronavirus (Covid-19) – update

We hope you, your families and communities are keeping well in these extraordinary times.

Further to our communication of the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Department of Rural and Community Development (the ‘Department’) and Pobal have been working with the national charity **ALONE**. We are delighted to have reached an agreement which outlines that if required, participants under the Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS) can also be referred to ALONE to benefit from extra supports. The services that ALONE offer are wide ranging and are detailed in the document attached. These include; a friendly call service, a befriending service and arranging practical supports such as organising shopping or collections of prescriptions or fuel. In order to deliver these supports, ALONE are partnering with many local organisations working in communities across Ireland. We also hope that your Organisation can support us with this new agreement.

**ALONE**, which is a national Organisation that provides supports to older people, have set up a National Helpline for the older person who has concerns or queries about Covid-19, or who may wish to avail of a ‘Friendly Call’ service and /or practical supports. For this particular service the **ALONE** COVID-19 Helpline for Older People number is (0818) 222 024.

### What your Organisation can do?

As a registered Organisation for the Seniors Alert Scheme, we know that you may already be offering additional supports for vulnerable people in your community at this time. Both Pobal and the Department acknowledge your dedication and thank you most sincerely for this vital work. We want to ensure that the Seniors Alert Scheme can support your critical efforts and to ensure that if your Organisation requires some extra support to reach out to older people in your community it is available.

We need your help. We would like you to identify older or vulnerable people in your community that would benefit from the services that ALONE are offering. These may be individuals that by virtue of their age, limited social connections, medical condition or illness, or because they live in an isolated place may benefit from a regular friendly call or a ‘shop drop’ that you may not be able to assist with but that ALONE can help with.

We would like you to make contact with these people, and:

- Explain that an initiative has been put in place by the Department and Pobal where a National Charity called **ALONE** are offering services to the older / vulnerable person during the Covid-19 pandemic to address their concerns or queries or to provide them with a friendly call and/or practical supports service

- Please inform them of the **ALONE** Helpline number, which is as follows:

**CORONAVIRUS HELPLINE FOR  
OLDER PEOPLE:  
0818 222 024**

**If you have concerns or queries about COVID-19  
call ALONE's dedicated support line, 8am-8pm**

- Alternatively, if they are not in a position to make contact themselves, your organisation can provide their contact details to **ALONE** on their behalf. It is important that you ensure you have the participant's permission beforehand and that they are satisfied and understand your organisation will forward their name and contact details to **ALONE**, who will then contact them directly. It would be important to keep a note of this for your records also.
- If this is the preferred option – confirm with the Participant: “Yes I am happy for you to forward my name and number on to **ALONE** to support me”

If your Organisation is willing to assist with this initiative, but requires additional support from Pobal, please send an email to [sas@pobal.ie](mailto:sas@pobal.ie) with Subject Heading “Covid 19 – Friendly Call Service”.

You are receiving this information in advance of an official announcement of the scheme, in order that you can make arrangements as appropriate. We therefore request that this be treated as confidential until the scheme is announced by Government later this week

On a final note, we wish to confirm that the Seniors Alert Scheme continues to operate as usual. We continue to receive and process applications and suppliers are available to install personal alarms for those who need them.

Both Pobal and the Department recognises the critical role that you are playing at this time of national need and once again thank you for your efforts. We will continue to keep you updated on relevant developments via the SAS Announcements and emails. If you require any further guidance you can contact our helpdesk Monday - Friday between 8:30am and 4:00pm on 01 5117222 or at [onlinesupport@pobal.ie](mailto:onlinesupport@pobal.ie).

Thank you for your continued support.

The SAS Team