



# NEIGHBOUR-TO-NEIGHBOUR

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FOR Highbury Mutual Aid

July 31

Vol. 1



## Welcome!

Since our first request for support on 25th March, Highbury Mutual Aid has assisted with 125 people requesting support, as well as sourcing volunteers to help with the vital work at the Elizabeth House food hub and other projects. These requests have included one-off errands, regular shopping or prescription deliveries assistance with technology, friendly phone calls to help those in isolation feel less alone, and the establishment of many long-term supportive relationships between neighbours. None of this would have been possible without the 377 volunteers who have so far signed up. It has been wonderful to see just how many people in the Highbury community want to offer their support in so many different ways. We have had such a generous response, that the number of volunteers has actually far outweighed the requests we've had so far.

We're continuing outreach efforts to let more people know about Highbury Mutual Aid, as well as working on other opportunities for volunteers such as mask making and local food delivery.

We'd also love to hear from volunteers and recipients with their feedback and helpful tips from their experience of Mutual Aid over the last few months. While Highbury adapts to a new normal, Highbury Mutual Aid remains committed to offering support and connection within our brilliant community.

So read this, our first newsletter, to find out how you can stay involved in supporting and building our fantastic community.

- Keep in touch!
- Give us your tips and ideas for making mutual aid work
- Share your ideas for more things we can do
- Tell us your stories about mutual aid

Along with other Islington Mutual Aid groups we are thinking about how we can record the wonderful things that happened as a result of our communities coming together. Do you have stories to tell? Do you have skills to tell them: writing, photography, film? Get in touch.

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We are Highbury Mutual Aid.

Find us: <https://bit.ly/HighburyMutualAid>

Email: [highburymutualaid@gmail.com](mailto:highburymutualaid@gmail.com)

Call/Text: 07961 703 751

For posts: <https://t.me/highburycovid19magroup>

For announcements: <https://t.me/highburycovid19ma>





## Are you shielding? Do you know someone who is?

Central Government has stated that those previously defined as clinically extremely vulnerable to becoming seriously ill if they catch the Covid-19 virus will no longer be advised to “shield” from 1 August 2020. From that date the National Shielding Service will stop delivering free food parcels to those previously asked to “shield” and will no longer organise medicine deliveries or some other services from central government. However, health and social care visits or remote contact provided by the London Borough of Islington will continue.

Those previously advised to “shield” will also remain eligible for priority supermarket slots, if they have registered for them before 17 July 2020.

London Borough of Islington is sending all those “shielding” in the borough (over 7,000 people at the last count) a booklet explaining what is happening and what services and help they can now get. Copies will also be available to carers, and Highbury Mutual Aid will also have them.

The borough’s WeArelslington Helpline on 0207 527 8222 will continue to assist those struggling to cope and who need help to shop or collect medicines by putting them in touch with those in the community who can assist them. It will also be possible to ask for friendly phone calls, assistance to once again walk or travel outside your home or information about staying healthy and well. WeArelslington can organise urgent supermarket delivery slots and assist those who are struggling financially due to the Covid-19 virus.

In Highbury Mutual Aid we remain committed to supporting all those in our community who need help, whatever the government says. So if people need it we hope to continue helping with shopping and other local errands, dogwalking, collecting prescriptions, making regular friendly phone calls and delivering for local food projects. But we also know that people may want to start going out, and we are happy to help with that. So if you are shielding, or know someone who is, and want to take that first step in in four months back into the world outside, to the shops, to the park, to visit a friend’s garden, we can do that with you.

We can check when the quietest times of day are, work out a route with you, and walk safely with you so that you have someone on hand to help if needed. This might be your regular volunteer if they are available or someone new. Please ask us if we can help.

- Please check on anyone you know who is shielding in Islington and make sure they have what they need
- Please volunteer to help shielders take their first steps out
- Ask us for copies of the shielder booklet from Islington

## So what happens now? Test trace and isolate

As lockdown eases local councils now have the responsibility to manage local outbreaks. The key to this is identifying people who may have caught the virus through contact, and getting them to **isolate: not to come into contact with anyone else while they are infectious.**

1. **Test:** Anyone with symptoms should test. You can book a test with NHS Test and Trace and you can expect the result back within a day.
2. **Identify close contacts:** NHS Test and Trace contacts all individuals with a positive test result asking them to share information on their close contacts in the 48 hours before symptoms started until 7 days after symptoms started.
3. **Alert:** NHS Test and Trace anonymously alerts contacts identified advising them to self-isolate for 14 days to help stop the spread of the virus.

Anyone identified is contacted by email, text or phone. Text messages will come from NHStracing. Calls will come from 0300 0135000.

Anyone who has been asked to self-isolate is told how to contact their local council and people who contact WeArelslington will be given further advice.



## Self isolation is important. Official advice is:

- Do not leave your home for any reason – if you need food or medicine, order it online or by phone, or ask friends and family to drop it off at your home
- Unless it is possible for you to work from home, do not attend work. You will need to contact your employer to advise them that you have been told to self-isolate. Your employer may ask to see the formal notification.
- Do not have visitors in your home, including friends and family – except for essential care
- Try to avoid contact with anyone you live with as much as possible
- If you live with someone at higher risk from coronavirus, try to arrange for them to stay with friends or family for 14 days.
- People you live with do not need to self-isolate unless a person in that household has had symptoms but they must take extra care to follow the guidance on social distancing and handwashing and avoid contact with you at home.
- It's really important to do this even if you don't feel unwell because, if you have been infected, you could become infectious to others at any point up to 14 days after contact with a case.

And, as you may have seen in the news, some people coming to the UK from abroad are also asked to quarantine for 14 days.

The problem is that the arrangements for people told to isolate or quarantine are complicated.

- If you are self-isolating because you have been contact traced, you can work from home or claim Statutory Sick Pay from your employer, but this is only £95.85 a week. Your employer may agree to pay more than this.
- You can get an isolation note from the NHS [website](https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/) (https://111.nhs.uk/isolation-note/) if your employer wants proof.
- If you have to go into quarantine after returning from abroad you can also work from home, but cannot claim sick pay (unless you are actually sick).
- Government advice is to claim Universal Credit if you need financial support for this period, but this is not an easy process and most claims take over a month to come through. You can get an advance payment, which is a loan you have to repay to the Department for Work and Pensions.

For help with benefits and financial problems, including help from the Residents Support Scheme if you are facing extreme hardship and struggling financially, phone WeAreIslington on 020 7527 8222.

## Stay safe at work

From 1st August employers can ask workers to come back into work, as long as the workplace is safe.

Islington Council and the Trades Union Congress are running a joint campaign to make sure people stay safe at work.

All workers have a right to be safe at work, wherever they work and whatever they do.

The coronavirus pandemic has made this even more important. Islington Council's top priority is keeping everyone safe and healthy throughout this pandemic: at home, in the community, and at work. Joining a union helps you stay safe, and keeps our communities safe.

It is important that all workers know their rights and what to do if issues arise. The Work Safely page on the council website provides information about joining a trade union, employers' legal duties to assess risks, and what to do if you have concerns about your safety at work.

Work Safely [website](https://www.islington.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-business/support-for-employees/stay-safe-at-work-join-a-union):

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/business/coronavirus-information-for-business/support-for-employees/stay-safe-at-work-join-a-union>.





# Get behind the mask: keeping everyone in Highbury safe



Photos courtesy of N4 Cutting Hub

Masks are now compulsory on public transport and in shops, and wearing a mask when you cannot distance is one of the best ways we can stop the spread of Covid19.

Four members of Highbury MA are now sewing masks with the N4 Cutting Hub, a volunteer run organisation, making and distributing good quality washable masks to those in need locally. The hub has made masks for care homes, food banks, community groups and many others.

Highbury maskmakers have made 100 masks so far, and 50 of those have been donated to Elizabeth House to help with the food project there.

Sewing or other tasks can be done at the Hub or from home and more volunteers means more masks! We would like to encourage as many Highbury people as possible to get involved: it can be fun and it is definitely worthwhile.

- Contact us to be put in touch with the other Highbury maskmakers, who have their own telegram group.
- Contact [www.n4cuttinghub.org](http://www.n4cuttinghub.org) if you would like to help or donate via the GoFundMe page.
- Donations welcome of polycotton sheets or attractive patterned cotton for mask fronts.
- The masks are really beautiful! Some of all those made are sold to contribute to the fundraising. Take a look at the latest designs to buy <https://www.n4cuttinghub.org/afrique-c-est-chique>



Some people are campaigning to get more people to wear their masks.

## Should Highbury Mutual Aid do the same?

- Get in touch to tell us what you think
- If we do run a mask campaign, can you help?
- What skills can you offer? Poster making? Messaging? Leaflet writing?



# Hungry in Highbury? Yes people are, but we can help

Did you know that we've got two brilliant food banks in Highbury? And another project that offers cooked food and some groceries to people who need it in our area.

We've had the pleasure of working with them since the start of lockdown. One Highbury project is based at Elizabeth House Community Centre, Hurlock Street, the other is St Joan of Arc R.C. Parish Church on Highbury Park. Between them, they provide food support to about 300 households of varying sizes and until recently, St Joan of Arc was also able to provide a drop-in collection on a Saturday. Sadly this has stopped but they are still delivering locally on Mondays.

In addition to their long-term funding, the food banks have been supported by many local businesses (such as Seasons and Blossoms, Godfrey's) as well as customers putting food items into a food bank donation box in the shop or even dropping food off directly at the foodbank.

Highbury volunteers have also been supporting the Castle project, which is now based at the Scout Hall, Bouverie Road N16 0AJ. They will deliver cooked meals and some groceries within a 2.5 mile radius ( ie. all of Highbury) Monday to Friday 12 - 4 pm . Collection is also possible. To arrange collection or delivery, call the day before needed if possible on :0207 254 2464 and leave a message. No referral is needed. If you want to volunteer or offer other help, phone the number and leave a message.

There's been a great response, but we know that food poverty is going to continue, so do continue giving. The food banks need

- Money
- Food
- Volunteers

Please do and give what you can.

- If you need **support with food**, please contact Highbury Mutual Aid and we can tell you which projects are open when. Or check on our [website](https://highbury.coronacorp.com/foodprojects/) or contact us via email or phone. (<https://highbury.coronacorp.com/foodprojects/>)

- If you would like to **donate dried goods**, tins, pasta, rice lentils, please drop off at your local shop if they have a box or go to the food banks themselves. Please drop off at:

- Elizabeth House Community Centre, 2 Hurlock St, N5 1ED on Mondays 11am - 3pm
- St Joan of Arc church, 60 Highbury Park N5 2XH

- If you would like to **volunteer** at:

- Elizabeth House please email [info@elizabeth-house.org.uk](mailto:info@elizabeth-house.org.uk) or call 020 7690 1300.
- The Castle please phone 0207 254 2464.

- If you would like to **donate cash**:

- Elizabeth House please go to <http://elizabeth-house.org.uk/>
- St Joan of Arc Church, please pay into their bank account:  
Sort code: 60-60-04; Account no: 46087141



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth House



Photo courtesy of Elizabeth House

## Working with the council

Since we started, Highbury Mutual Aid has worked closely with Islington council, to coordinate services, make sure they know what is needed in the area, and share useful information. There is now a really useful page of information on the council website that all mutual aiders can use.

<https://www.islington.gov.uk/advice/voluntary-and-community-sector/key-information-for-mutual-aid-groups>



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You have received this newsletter because you have signed up as a volunteer or requested assistance with Highbury East and West Covid 19 Mutual Aid Group. We are not expecting to send a newsletter out very often but of course if you are not interested in receiving more emails from us, please let us know. And if you know others in Highbury who would like to receive this newsletter please pass it on, and ask them to join up by filling in a form on our website or by joining the telegram group.