

Coronavirus – Government funding for Age Scotland to run helpline

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon visited Age Scotland's vital helpline for older people today and announced £80,000 extra funding for the charity.

Age Scotland is handling COVID-19 inquiries from their Edinburgh office.

Later there will be confirmation of a package of support for people, communities, local authorities and the third sector as they face the impact of the virus.

Communities Secretary Aileen Campbell and Social Security Secretary Shirley-Anne Somerville, will set out details of a £350m package of support to the Scottish Parliament this afternoon.

The First Minister highlighted the service as an example of the important role the third sector can play in mitigating the impact of COVID-19.



The new funding being provided by The Scottish Government will cover new equipment, allow staff to work from home and help increase the helpline's capacity from about 100 calls a day to approximately 1,500.

The First Minister said: "In these challenging times, when we are faced with a pandemic to which older people are especially vulnerable, Age Scotland's helpline is providing an invaluable service.

"As older people are advised to reduce their social contacts to protect themselves from COVID-19, the staff here in Edinburgh are a lifeline to those seeking practical advice or just a friendly chat." I am delighted that with this extra funding, the Scottish Government will help make this service available to many more people."

Brian Sloan, Age Scotland's Chief Executive, said: "This is a concerning time for many older people and it is important that they have access to the most up to date, and trustworthy, information and advice as Scotland adapts to COVID-19.

"We are delighted that The Scottish Government are making a further investment in the Age Scotland Helpline so that we can scale up our efforts to provide information, friendship and

advice to older people, their families and carers at this critical time.

“This will also help us increase the number of friendship calls we make to older people across Scotland who may have no one else to talk to as they socially distance themselves, providing them reassurance and a friendly chat.”