

Wednesday 20 May 2020

The NFA is supporting the #BigHousingThankyou today [Wednesday 20 May 2020], celebrating our frontline housing workers who have been the invisible heroes of the country's COVID-19 battle.

The day begins with the launch of a two-minute video on the website of the sector's top news publication, Inside Housing, just before 9am. The film features 22 residents and leading figures from organisations across the housing sector, including NHF CEO Kate Henderson and Shelter's Polly Neate CBE. They read a specially commissioned poem against a backdrop of housing staff from more than 30 housing associations, councils and ALMOs, all pictured on the COVID-19 frontline.

[This link to the #BigHousingThankyou film](#) will go public at 9am today [Weds].

Throughout the day, picture stories from NFA members will feature among scores of #BigHousingThankyou tributes to frontline housing staff on [the campaign's Twitter account, @OurBHTY](#).

Home-working has not been an option for the many hundreds of tenancy, support and assistance officers, the skilled trades staff and the community hub workers on whom so many neighbourhoods depend, whether residents are tenants or home-owners.

At a time when the whole country was told to stay at home, their presence became more important than ever. They have kept thousands of communities safe and well-cared for: doing repairs, clearing rubbish, cleaning, staffing food bank services, doing safety checks, delivering care packages, and phoning or calling on hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people to check they're okay.

They became a crucial part of the national COVID-19 response as they swapped roles without missing a beat, going wherever they were most needed. They've given up lunch hours to collect prescriptions; they've gone out with other key workers from 999 services to check on residents who neighbours were concerned about; they've volunteered as emergency community first responders and even for the difficult but essential job of staffing cemeteries and morgues.

Their back-office colleagues have also been stretched to the limit. At a time when so many residents have feared for their livelihoods and even their homes, call centre staff and financial wellbeing and rent officers have reassured and advised customers and tirelessly supported colleagues out on the ground.

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