**RDA UK Update 31 March 2020**

Message from Ed Bracher, Chief Executive, RDA UK

It is two weeks today since we had to email all of you to recommend the suspension of all RDA activities. It already seems a lifetime ago, and the world certainly seems a very different place.

In a fast-changing situation, we have tried our best to keep you informed and up to date as much as possible. We have also been working to support individual groups and the whole organisation in any way we can. As with all things RDA, the picture around the UK is very mixed. While some groups can cope with closure to a reasonable extent, we know others are already facing immediate hardship.

Our regional teams, in partnership with the staff team at National Office, are doing their utmost to support groups in their area, so please do contact your County or Regional Chair if you need help.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have been working closely with other organisations: other BEF members, governing bodies, NCVO, the Small Charities Coalition and more, to put pressure on the government to provide support to keep charities going (especially smaller charities like RDA Groups). There has been considerable engagement with minsters and civil servants, and support from MPs, but to date no further support has been forthcoming.

In the midst of a crisis like this, it’s easy to feel powerless, or like individual voices won’t make a difference, but they can. If you want to have your say (or any of your volunteers, participants and supporters do) you can directly help this campaign by writing to your MP and explaining the situation you are in (find their contact details here: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/Commons>).

Additionally, you can share your own experiences and stories on social media using the hashtag [#EveryDayCounts](https://technology-trust-news.org/G8B-6T7SL-L7M3ZT-40D8T5-1/c.aspx) and get your stories out there.  It is useful to highlight any specific action you are having to take to cope with the crisis and the level of financial squeeze.  Lady Barran (the Minister responsible for charities) is being proactive and helpful, so if you want to, tag [@dianabarran](https://technology-trust-news.org/G8B-6T7SL-L7M3ZT-40D8T6-1/c.aspx) and thank her for all she is doing to fight for charities.  You can also tag [@rishisunak](https://technology-trust-news.org/G8B-6T7SL-L7M3ZT-40D8T7-1/c.aspx) and highlight the need for financial support.  It is also worth tagging local media outlets/journalists/mainstream media.

We know that every RDA Group will be affected in some way by this crisis and, like us at National Office, we know that you are doing everything you can to make sure that we come through this. Thank you for your resilience, your messages of goodwill and support for the wider RDA community, and for doing your best to still be there for our participants – now and in the future.



Ed Bracher, Chief Executive, RDA UK