

## Your community response

These are unprecedented times. They call for leadership, courage and community. Your business has the opportunity and the responsibility to help.

At a time like this, it's easy to think that we simply don't have time for our Corporate Social Responsibility. But as uncertain as things are, it's *never* been more important to be team and community-minded.

Times of fear, uncertainty and anxiety can drive us to become very self-focused. But the pandemic is absolutely a reason why community engagement and leadership (two key aspects of CSR) have suddenly become more important, not less.

What's more, after taking care of your financial response plan, the outward focus will help you navigate the crisis more effectively – emotionally and mentally.

*Now more than ever, your team and your community are looking to you for a demonstration of your values.*

Below are the best ideas I have come across (so far) for how your business can help right now, and links to get involved.

**Care calls** – you have access to a database and can easily identify all your patients in the 'at-risk' groups. Deploy someone to call all them and offer help, signposting to services, or just a friendly voice. Make a note of those who it's clear will need regular contact. You could be their lifeline.

**Food Banks** - my local Foodbank saw a 200% increase in genuine demand in the first week of the pandemic. Without donations and volunteers, they will not be able to serve people in need in the coming days. You can help:

1. Donate food - check their Facebook Page first to see what they need, or get in touch, then follow through
2. Donate time - in the short and medium-term, they may need help. Many Foodbank volunteers are retired, and so are now self-isolating
3. Offer to deliver packages - many clients are vulnerable and so can't collect food as they normally would. Offering transport is another way to help

**Communications** - ensure that your social media and website share the key messages. Share about how you are trying to help and encourage people to do the same. Also, encourage individuals to do what they can to support the community, such as supporting local business, buying restaurant vouchers, ordering takeaway meals etc.

[Government advice](#)

[Canva social media kit](#)

**informationisbeautiful** – great visual presentation of the data, rigorously referenced and updated daily

**Contact other care providers** - other parts of the care service are under extreme pressure and may appreciate the offer of help. Contact GPs, Care Homes and the like to see how you can help.

**Co-ordinate and be a hub** - depending on the needs in your area, you could establish your business as a co-ordination point for either offers of help or donations of items for Care Packages (for people self-isolating who don't qualify for Foodbanks).

**Connect with others** - there is a multitude of local groups springing up to support each other. Join Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK, download apps like Nextdoor to find out how you can join with others and find people who need help.

**Donate Blood** - Give Blood, or keep giving it. There will be a slowdown in people able to donate, so keep your appointment as long as you and your family are asymptomatic.

## **About Mark Topley**

Mark helps leaders to grow their teams and their business with CSR. He coaches them through the challenges of tackling Corporate Social Responsibility to make it a competitive business advantage. Mark helps by giving practices clarity, structure and momentum in CSR, establishing an excellence approach to team leadership, ethics, environment and community engagement.

He is the former CEO of Bridge2Aid and spent 10 years living and working in East Africa. He saw first-hand the benefits of a well-structured approach to CSR through creating successful partnerships with international companies, UK dental companies and small businesses alike.

Mark speaks and writes regularly about CSR in dentistry. He has published articles in titles across the dental press, and blogs at [Dentistry.co.uk](http://Dentistry.co.uk) and [TheCSRCoach.uk](http://TheCSRCoach.uk). He is a sought-after speaker for national events, training courses and study clubs.

Mark is a member of the judging panels of the Private Dentistry Awards and the Dental Industry Awards. He has worked with some of the top practices and dental companies in the UK, as well as small and large organisations in other sectors