

Keeping yourself and others 'Safe and Sound'

Fact sheet 3

Boundaries for community volunteers (COVID-19)

What is a boundary?

Boundaries are limits or rules to the relationship between the worker/volunteer and person receiving the service from your group/organisation. Boundaries exist to protect both them and others.

Definition

'the limit of what someone considers to be acceptable behaviour'

Why are boundaries important?

Volunteering and working in your own community/ village et c has great benefits. It can also be a challenge; so make sure you are clear on what you/ your volunteers are expected to do as part of their volunteering role and what they are NOT to do as part of their role. They cannot be all things to all people.

Boundaries mark the differences between personal and professional/ 'volunteering' roles and activities. Clear, effective boundaries balance a caring and supportive relationship with a person alongside appropriate professional distance. They:

- Set expectations of behaviour for staff and volunteers
- Provide way of supporting staff and volunteers so potentially compromising situations are avoided
- Protect service users of your group from abuse or inappropriate behaviour from staff and volunteers
- Reduce confusion for all parties
- Allow you to stick to your role and not take on too much

Note: A role description will help as it will provide a clear explanation of what your role involves, what is expected of you and who you need to speak to if you need support!

What are some boundaries and safeguards we should use?

Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Respect and maintain confidentiality*. Keep any information you learn about those you help confidential, even after you leave.
 - *Do not confuse confidentiality with secrecy. If you have a safeguarding worry you cannot keep that a secret/confidential you must tell your safeguarding lead (see our Keeping Safe & Sound Factsheet 1: What to do if you are worried someone is being abused)
 - If the person tells you they are worried about something that is not related to your volunteering role ask what is worrying them and tell them that you will pass the information back to your group's coordinator for support
- Do always tell a trusted person and the scheme coordinator where you are going, when, who you are 'seeing', how long you expect to be. Call and let them know when you have finished.
- Do Carry ID badges. When you are wearing your badge you are there in a volunteering capacity.

This means that staff/ volunteers should:

- *understand the limits and expectations of their role*
- *always act, and be seen to act, within the boundaries of their role*
- *avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motivation and intentions*
- *take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour*
- **Follow Government Social distancing rules (on pg. 2)**
- **Follow Government guidance on how to keep safe (on pg. 2)**

This means that Organisations/ Groups should:

- *have a clear role description*
- *Let staff and volunteers know what is and is not expected of them in their role*
- *ensure that systems are in place for concerns to be raised*
- *ensure that staff/volunteers are not placed in situations which could make them particularly vulnerable*
- **Follow Government Social distancing rules (on pg. 2)**
- **Follow Government guidance on how to keep safe (on pg 2)**

Do nots

- Do not give out your personal mobile number. If as a part of your volunteering role you have to call someone, call from a withheld number. To withhold your number on individual calls dial 141 before the telephone number you want to call and it will show to the caller as 'Private'
- Do not give out your full name and address; if they do not already know you
- Do not go into the persons home, unless that is an explicitly agreed part of your role and you have clear guidance in place for this.
- Do not be on your own with a service user, work in at least pairs.
- Do not accept any gifts or money from people you are supporting
- Do not ask someone to reveal their PIN number or give you their bank card – if fraud is committed on their bank account they are unlikely to get any refunds as they disclosed their PIN. You could also find yourself under suspicion.
 - It is recommended that people set up shopping home delivery accounts where they can – or a trusted person set the account up for them so they can use it if they cannot do it themselves; use local shops home delivery services. Can they call their bank and arrange for a transfer of funds over the phone? This is not easy, be wise.
 - Could they do a 'Click and collect' shop and pick up their shopping when you do your own. **(Try and limit the number of times you have to go out).**

The support you may offer could mean you will be out in the community supporting the most vulnerable through the COVID-19 virus outbreak. To keep yourself/volunteers safe follow the government guidance.

How to protect yourself – General Guidance

- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water at regular intervals throughout the day.
- If running water and soap is not available then ensure you have alcohol-based hand wipes or sanitiser to kill viruses that may be on your hands.
- Avoid touching your face and keep hands away from eyes, mouth and nose to avoid spread of any virus.
- If you cough, use a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately. If the cough becomes persistent then you should follow government self-isolation precautions. If no tissue is available, cough into your arm.

- Consider social distancing by maintaining at least 2 metres distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.

- If you feel unwell and have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and follow NHS guidance whilst avoiding any contact with people.

• What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 Symptoms?

If you are concerned about your health in relation to Coronavirus and believe you have symptoms then you need to pause your volunteering activity and self-isolate for the required period of time. Inform your group coordinator if you become unwell and have recently volunteered..

- Please check out the Public Health Guidance to identify how long you need to isolate for.
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>