

***Safe Volunteering* Information Pack**  
**for**  
**Covid-19 Community Response Group**  
**Leaders**



**This volunteer information pack is to encourage safe practice for carrying out essential volunteering during the current Covid-19 crisis. The information is for all volunteering activities where a minimum 2 meter distance is kept between all parties. The pack supplements the Toolkit we have created for Community Response groups to Covid-19 and is accompanied by a 'Staying Safe Volunteer Factsheet' which you can share with your volunteers.**

It is important during the current Covid-19 'lock-down' that volunteering should only be done to provide essential support such as providing groceries (as infrequently as possible) for those unable to access food and medicine themselves either due to going into self-isolation or being a 'shielded' member of our community. For these essential types of support make sure you are following the most recent government advice and NHS advice at [gov.uk/coronavirus](http://gov.uk/coronavirus) and [nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/)

It is very unlikely that you will encounter any serious problems while volunteering, but it is common sense to be alert to any potential risks or hazards that could cause harm. It is important that you do your own risk assessment before you start every task. This doesn't mean filling in forms, but thinking logically and carefully about what you are embarking on and how best to do this bearing in mind the following guidance and the current NHS and Government Covid-19 information that is in place at the time of your volunteering task.

Only volunteer to support with outbound essential activities (running errands such as collecting prescriptions or shopping) if you (and other members of your household) are well and not in the high risk group. Those who are in self isolation or in high risk groups themselves, can still volunteer with tasks such as answering and allocating calls for support, or making calls to check in or chat with isolated neighbours.

[On the Community Action Suffolk website there is also a 1 page simple guide for Safe Volunteering for your volunteers that you can use.](#)

**To reduce risk and understand our actions we need to understand the different groups in our community right now:**

**Group A - 12 week shielding.** Anyone over 70 or with a pre-existing chronic health condition **MUST STAY HOME FOR 12 WEEKS FROM MOTHERS DAY.** This group cannot go to anywhere where there are other people for 12 weeks e.g. supermarkets, pharmacies, banks.

**Group B - 7/14 days isolation.** Anyone who has symptoms **MUST STAY HOME FOR 7 DAYS** if they live alone. If they live with others the entire household **MUST STAY HOME FOR 14 DAYS.** This is called self-isolating or quarantine.

**Group C - Healthy population – Our volunteers! MUST PRACTISE SOCIAL DISTANCING.** Avoid any unnecessary journeys, choose your own car over public transport, keep your distance from others in public places, and wash your hands with soap regularly and for longer.

We have a short film on our website on Volunteering Safely

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/covid-19-response/covid-response-communities/>

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## **Do not leave your home if you have coronavirus symptoms**

Do not leave your home if you have either:

- a high temperature – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- a new, continuous cough – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)

**To protect others, do not go to places like a GP surgery, pharmacy or hospital. Stay at home.**

Use the 111 online coronavirus service to find out what to do.

## **How to stop infection spreading**

There are things you can do to help reduce the risk of you and anyone you live with getting ill with coronavirus:

### **Do**

- ✓ wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- ✓ use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- ✓ wash your hands as soon as you get back home
- ✓ cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- ✓ put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

### **Don't**

- × do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

(Taken from <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/> on 27/03/2020, please check this website for up to current advice after this date)

## Volunteering Tasks & Best Practice

Activity guidance below is accurate at time of production, at anytime the Government may issue new laws or guidelines and certain activities may need to be curtailed to ensure our country's health is safeguarded; please ensure you are staying up to date with the Government's guidelines by visiting <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus> to ensure your voluntary activities are within the law, you must stay aware of how the situation may change.

As at current time of writing none of the activities listed below require being closer than 2 meters (social distancing) so other than practicing good hygiene, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is not required.

### REMEMBER:

- Volunteers do not enter a client's home or have direct contact with people apart from those within their own household
- Ensure all volunteers socially distance (allow 2 meters between yourself and others)
- Where possible leave any shopping or prescription items on the client's doorstep, knock on the door and retreat to a safe distance, then wait until items are taken in or the client gives a signal from their window
- Prior planning and agreement of tasks with the client can ease any stresses & risks around this process
- A system of identification of volunteers is a good way of those that you helping be reassured that their volunteer has come from your scheme.

### 1. Telephone Checking-In

Does not require a DBS check

- Volunteers calling other volunteers or immediate and local neighbours.
- 'Checking-in' means offering a friendly voice to those isolated.
- It does not mean offering advice. You must be careful what conversations are taking place. Please refer to specialist organisations should someone need advice.

### 2. Shopping

Does require a DBS check if you are *handling* cash

Does not require a DBS check, if:

- You are not handling money or a store gift card.
- A solution to this could be suggesting 'Click and Collect', or payments in advance; this way you do not have to enter a shop or handle cash, you can simply collect the shopping with a reference name/number.
- If click & collect is not available can you arrange the shopping via a local shop/store who can take payment from the client directly over the phone? Many businesses, particularly local ones are diversifying to meet the needs of their community during the epidemic.
- **Do not take or use a client's debit or credit card; do not let them disclose their payment card details to you. Please see Money Handling guidance below should cash only be the only option of shopping payment.**
- You should wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser before and after your visit.

### **3. Prescriptions / Picking up of medical items**

Does *not* require a DBS check if:

- You are not handling money or a cash card.
- A solution to this could be suggesting 'Click and Collect' or payments in advance.
- For many people in your community, prescriptions will already have been paid for in advance, or may be under a payment exemption. It is worth checking this in advance.
- You should wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser before and after your visit.

### **4. Dog Walking**

Does *not* require a DBS check

- We would recommend you not getting too close to the dog owner. Stay 2 metres or 3 steps away, and consider picking up the pet from the porch, or front garden if it is safe to do so.
- Consider using your own lead, poo bags and treats.
- You should wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser before and after your visit. Try to avoid too much contact with the dog such as stroking and petting to help prevent transferal or spread of the virus.
- Ask the owner if extra help is needed like fetching pet food or medication, or indeed urgent vet visits.

### **5. Leaflet Dropping**

Does *not* require a DBS check

- Volunteers dropping leaflets through doors of local and immediate neighbours notifying of local help and support available...this is not permitted as an 'additional' outdoor activity, but could be made part of your daily exercise walking route.
- Do not knock at doors, or attempt to directly engage with or pass flyers to individuals or home owners - Remember to stay 2 metres away from others!
- You should wash your hands or use a hand sanitiser before and after your visit, and ensure you are following current NHS and Government activity and hygiene guidance

Updated on 08/04/20 – Motor Insurance & Volunteering - 'If you are using your own car for voluntary purposes to transport medicines or groceries to support others who are impacted by Covid-19, your cover will not be affected. You do not need to contact your insurer to update your documents or extend your cover...If you are a Community First Responders or other 'Blue Light' volunteer, then please contact your insurer or broker.' For more information visit <https://www.abi.org.uk/products-and-issues/topics-and-issues/coronavirus-hub/motor-insurance/>

## **Handling Money - Procedure and Guidance for Volunteers**

If prepayment isn't possible, but the client has cash available at home, you could pay for the items yourself and then confirm cost over the phone to the client, asking them to prepare money to be collected upon shopping drop-off, ask if the client can have money ready in an envelope that they can place on the door mat while they retrieve their shopping, you can then wait at a safe distance and collect once they have returned inside – ensure a receipt is kept and can be shown to the client through their window etc.

If you can't pay for shopping yourself and then be reimbursed, arrange to collect money from the client in advance, but ensure you confirm this with your group lead in advance, or ask them if there is an alternative option that they have sanctioned.

Volunteers who undertake shopping for a service user must document the handling of money clearly; ensure receipts for goods purchased are provided for the service user to view, (even if through a window at this time due to the current epidemic), then store for reference. It is good practice to report any handling of service user money to the committee. It is most important to report any accusation or disagreement over shopping money/change or goods immediately.

During the Covid-19 epidemic, please try to arrange for shopping pre-payments where possible; if money does have to change hands do so without making contact, take extra care to wipe down or sanitise money where it has come from a symptomatic household who are self-isolating/in quarantine, or where change is being left with shopping of those who are being shielded from the illness.

We have created a separate guide for Handling Money and Shopping that you will find on our website [www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

## Suggested Hygiene Practices

- Minimise trips to shops and pharmacies where possible, can volunteers complete a few errands in one trip/visit?
- Be cautious of busy shops or pharmacies, and practice social distancing when shopping!

### **Volunteers can greatly reduce the risk of spreading the virus from symptomatic households to shielded households through simple planning:**

Could you deliver to the different types of household on different days?

Another option would be to deliver to all 12 week households in the morning. Deliver to 7/14 day household in the afternoon. Return home, it may be advisable to remove clothing and place in the wash immediately, always wash hands/arms as have been exposed while running errands, and change into clean clothes.

**Volunteer delivering to 12 week households are protecting the residents. If this group gets Coronavirus they are more likely to suffer life threatening complications (Covid19).**

- **Remember you have just been to a supermarket or pharmacy (a public place) and you're trying to avoid dropping off Coronavirus, to the 12 week shielders, along with their food or medicine.**
- Could you wear gloves while you shop and pack items in plastic bags from the store or place in a cardboard box?
- After shopping be conscious of anything you touch outside or inside your car, bicycle handles, shopping bag handles etc. It is worth disinfecting car door handles, gear sticks, steering wheels, seat belt catches etc. after returning from a supermarket or any public place where you have touched anything.
- It's recommended you discuss delivery options with the resident prior to delivering so that wherever possible you have a plan before you get there e.g.; can they place a plastic tub outside on the driveway or doorstep for you to place items in?
- Read any signs that have been put up on approach to each property. They may include clear delivery instructions to protect you. Such as place items on driveway, porch, through gate, in box provided.
- Be conscious of anything you touch. Could the resident leave the gate open for your arrival? So that you don't need to touch the gate or porch handles or doorbells etc. Wear gloves (any normal outdoor or gardening gloves will do as long as you keep them only for deliveries and if possible leave them in the car or your own porch afterwards. (Don't then take them in to your house and place them on the kitchen table.)
- Discuss whether you are able to disinfect any items before delivery or whether the resident is able to do it. It is preferable that 12 week shielders take responsibility for any item entering their homes but, some elderly or disabled residents may not be able to do this, and others may need convincing. Non perishables can be left for three days in a tub in the garage or hallway or spare room before touching, e.g. cans, tetra packs, plastic packaging. Or they can be lightly sprayed or wiped with disinfectant and used sooner.

This is not a definitive guide but hopefully it will give you points to consider in protecting those you are delivering to and yourself. When you come across examples of good practise that others could easily implement please tell us!

## **Please remember to look after yourself as well as others:**

- Avoid you and your volunteers sharing your own personal details that you would not normally tell to 'strangers' or those you do not trust.
- You can hide your phone number when making calls by dialling 141 before the phone number of the person you are wishing to call.
- Don't put yourself at risk, if you don't feel comfortable with a call for assistance, a client's behaviour, or a conversation you are part of with a client, then remove yourself from the situation and report back any concerns to your group lead.
- If you are driving as part of your volunteering please ensure your vehicle and the current weather conditions are fit to do so, ensure you have informed your insurance policy provider that you are driving as part of your volunteering (this shouldn't increase your premium, but should ensure you are appropriately covered, should an accident occur while you are driving while volunteering).

## **Health and Wellbeing for Volunteers in the Community and Volunteer group Leaders**

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, Suffolk has seen the demand for volunteers soar, and the number of people who have now become volunteers is truly staggering. Volunteering is a very special role in a community, and now more than ever before volunteers are ensuring that everybody has access to food and medication to be able to stay at home safely.

Whether you are shopping for your shielding neighbours, working with a local community group to provide hot meals to older people in your town, or making daily phone calls to someone who lives alone, your contribution is vital in supporting the county to navigate through this situation.

You may have found yourself volunteering for the first time, and without much forethought or planning. Or you may be coordinating a local group that did not even exist a few weeks ago. Our society has changed at an incredible pace and you and your communities have responded with amazing flexibility and enthusiasm.

We understand that volunteering can impact on your wellbeing and as the crisis continues you may start to feel fatigued, stressed or anxious. There are a range of online resources about Health and Wellbeing and volunteering that you may find useful to read through. You can use these yourself and share with other volunteers.

### [Healthy Suffolk](#)

Looking after your mental and physical health while at home. If you have to stay at home due to coronavirus (COVID-19), you may be feeling bored, anxious or lonely. It's so important to understand how you are feeling and to do some simple things which can help you feel better. The Five Ways to Wellbeing gives advice on what we can do every day to make ourselves feel good.

### [Suffolk MIND](#)

Find out how Suffolk MIND can support you through the Covid-19 pandemic. Lots of wellbeing resources available.

### [First Response](#)

First response is a 24/7 helpline offering immediate advice, support and signposting for people with mental health difficulties.

If you are experiencing something that makes you feel unsafe, distressed or worried about your mental health you can now call the helpline on 0808 196 3494.

### [Our Frontline](#)

Our Frontline offers round-the-clock one-to-one support, by call or text, from trained volunteers, plus resources, tips and ideas to look after your mental health. Although volunteers not directly mentioned, they can access this service too.

### [Volunteering Matters](#)

Resources on how to volunteer safely.

## **Support for Leaders of Volunteers in a community setting**

As a leader of volunteers you may feel the pressure of managing others and want to ensure you are doing the right thing to keep your volunteers and beneficiaries of your service safe. For this reason, we have created a safe space online where you can chat about your role and be connected to others in similar roles to yourself called Let's Talk Community Volunteering. We run these fortnightly and also offer free bookable 121 sessions for volunteer leaders to talk through any challenges or questions they may have around volunteering and running of a community group.

We have put together [resources](#) to help you set up and run your volunteer group that helps bring a little co-ordination so it can operate more efficiently and smoothly.

You can contact the volunteering team at [volunteering@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

To book onto our 121 sessions or networking events please visit:

<https://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk/events/list/>

## **CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION**

In the course of your associated role with the group, you may have access to, see or hear, confidential information concerning personal affairs of Clients or Volunteers. Unless acting on the instructions of an authorised person within the group, on no account should such information be divulged or discussed except in the performance of your normal duties. This is a requirement of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) effective 25/05/2018. Only use and keep what you need to provide help to vulnerable people during the COVID-19 crisis. When the emergency is over, make sure you and your volunteers securely delete or destroy any personal information that you no longer need. However, data protection rules will not stop you from helping those in need. In fact "it could be more harmful not to share data than to share it. For example, you might need to tell a local council about elderly residents who are housebound due to self-isolation and who need support".

You must ensure that all records, including computer screens and computer printouts of any Clients or Volunteers, are never left in such a manner that unauthorised persons can obtain access to them. Computer screens must always be cleared when left unattended and you must ensure you log out of computer systems.

Confidential or sensitive information relating to an individual may be divulged where there is a risk of danger to the individual, a volunteer, or the public at large, or where it is against the law to withhold it. In these circumstances, information may be divulged to external agencies e.g. police or social services on a need to know basis.

Our Setting up a Community Response ToolKits provide more detail on this with example agreement templates for you to use. [www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk](http://www.communityactionsuffolk.org.uk)

## **SAFEGUARDING**

*'Safeguarding' is about protecting a child or adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility'.*

Our Setting up a Covid-19 Community Response group Toolkit has more information on Safeguarding including templates.

All young people under the age of 18 are considered vulnerable.

In general terms, an adult (a person aged 18 or over) is classed as vulnerable when they are receiving one of the following services:

- Health care;
- Relevant personal care;
- Social care work;
- Assistance in relation to general household matters by reason of age, illness or disability;
- Relevant assistance in the conduct of their own affairs; or
- Conveying (due to age, illness or disability in prescribed circumstances)

The safety and wellbeing of vulnerable adults who are at risk of abuse and children is especially important at this time.

We know that abuse can increase when people are isolated and there are less people to intervene or provide support. As we practice social isolation or social distancing there will be less people to spot signs of abuse or to call for help.

So please continue wherever possible to make sure you are following your existing safeguarding policies and practices in protecting service users, staff, and volunteers and that all your staff and volunteers, whatever their role, are able to spot possible signs of abuse, know who to tell and when. If you have not got any the please refer to the Setting up a Covid-19 Community Response Toolkit.

Please use the resources and information on the Community Action Suffolk website to support your work with children and adults appropriately and to ensure your group provides a safe service based on proven, effective safeguarding policies and procedures.