

Volunteering Guidelines (with reference to NCVO guidance)

We know that when a crisis hits, people often step up. This has certainly been the case as the Covid-19 pandemic has developed. With many people new to volunteering or to organising a volunteer response here are some guidelines to keep you safe as you offer your time and skills to help each other.

Always follow current government guidance, especially when we are asked to stay inside and only come out if it is essential (to get food, medicines and to help vulnerable people etc) Latest guidance can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

As of 23 March 2020

You should only leave the house for one of four reasons:

- Shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, which must be as infrequent as possible.
- One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
- Any medical need, or to provide care or to help a vulnerable person.
- Travelling to and from work, but only where this absolutely cannot be done from home.

These four reasons are **exceptions** - even when doing these activities, you should be minimising time spent outside of the home and ensuring you are 2 metres apart from anyone outside of your household.

For individuals and communities:

Look after your neighbours

The simplest thing everyone can do right now is look out for their neighbours and offer help with shopping.

It's not just about neighbours who are self-isolating or vulnerable. Other people in the community who might also appreciate help include medical staff and volunteers, staff and volunteers in key worker roles, supermarket workers and delivery drivers.

People in need

If you have identified someone in need who you can't help then please use [Gloucestershire Community Help Hub](#) to register the need.

Stay safe when supporting others

- Let family and friends know what you are doing
- Support family, friends and neighbours by phone or video call

- Stay at least two metres – about 3 steps – away from those you are helping
- Offer to run errands for people but stay outside of people's homes
- Keep washing your hands often, for 20 seconds
- Don't take on too much – it's often better not to offer at all than to let someone down
- If you are trying to help someone with very serious issues don't be afraid to contact the appropriate statutory services

Purchasing shopping

- Only take essential orders from neighbours. Where possible take payment in advance. If this is not possible you will need to make a decision whether you think the household will refund you. These decisions will have to be based on trust. (Bear in mind some shops are asking for payments by card)
- Try on-line shopping
- Try telephone orders to local independent providers, where payment will be taken in advance and a volunteer could pick it up and deliver to the vulnerable person (leaving it on the doorstep)
- Pharmacies – local pharmacies are still making deliveries, as far as we know.

Welfare concerns

If you have a safeguarding or welfare concern there is some helpful information to collect

- Name, age and address of the person at risk
- Why you are concerned
- Who lives with them
- Your relationship to the individual
- Date of your contact with the person concerned

If you are concerned about the immediate safety of an adult or child please contact the police on 101 or 999 in an emergency.

If you have a safeguarding concern about a vulnerable adult or child then please contact

- Adult Helpdesk (Gloucestershire County Council) 01452 426868
- Children and Families front Door (Gloucestershire County Council) 01452 426565 or email childrenhelpdesk@gloucestershire.gov.uk

Can anyone set themselves up as a support group?

Anyone can set up a group and it's great that people have a natural impulse to do so. Once you start to form an organisation you encounter more legal responsibilities by default. This includes how you are managing safeguarding. You should also look at insurance for volunteers. The laws around this can be quite complicated, which is why the best advice for now is to check on the neighbours around you.

NCVO have made their [KnowHow](#) guidance free for everyone to access any further information you might need about setting up community groups or you can contact GRCC Community Development Team for further support info@grcc.org.uk

For organisations involving volunteers

All government guidance must be followed – only essential services should be provided at this time.

- Ensure that volunteers understand the government guidance and health guidance to minimise contact with people and practice [good hygiene](#) if they are undertaking an essential volunteer role.
- Consider if there are any changes you can make to current volunteer roles that can be done either online or from home, which will help your organisation to continue to operate. Some of your volunteers who are well and staying at home may be looking to do something purposeful.
- Check on your volunteers – have they got the support in place that they need, particularly if they are from one of the vulnerable groups. If you identify someone in need direct them to the [Gloucestershire Community Help Hub](#), where they can register their particular need.
- If your organisation is able to offer help to the response to Covid-19, then please register on the [Gloucestershire Community Help Hub](#) too. Your details will be picked up by the district council local to where you are based. Or you can contact them direct to let them know what your organisation is doing to support local communities.
- Data protection – the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) have guidance about sharing information <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/data-protection-and-coronavirus/>
- Safeguarding – continue to protect vulnerable adults and children through effective safeguarding practices. There are some useful online resources for new volunteers for safeguarding children ([NSPCC](#)) and vulnerable adults ([MENCAP](#)).
- DBS checks – there are a number of local organisations which can administer DBS checks for your volunteers. A small charge is made for their administration costs. Young Gloucestershire currently have some funding which means they are able to offer DBS checks for volunteers at no cost. This is only for a short period of time. Please contact Chris Banting Chris.Banting@youngglos.org.uk or call 01452 501008

For further information:

Latest Government guidance <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

NHS England <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Government Guidance – Identifying Key Workers
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

Gloucestershire Community Help Hub
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/gloucestershires-community-help-hub/>

Charity Commission – Covid-19 Guidance for the Charity Sector

NCVO <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus>
<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/i-want-to-volunteer/volunteering-coronavirus>

NCVO KnowHow <https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/>

GRCC <https://www.grcc.org.uk/> Staff are currently working from home. Contact details are on the GRCC website.

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