

Covid-19 Advice for Volunteers - Nov 2020

Work and volunteering

You can leave home for work purposes, or to provide voluntary or charitable services, where you cannot do this from home.

National restrictions begin in England from 5 November.

If you want to volunteer during COVID-19 pandemic, you can do this:

- from home, for example by working on a telephone support helpline
- outside your home, for example by delivering food and medicine
- in a workplace, for example an office

Volunteering from home

Anyone can volunteer from home. This is the safest way to protect yourself and others during the winter.

Volunteering outside your home

You can volunteer outside your home if:

- you cannot volunteer from home
- you follow the social distancing guidelines
- no one in your household has symptoms of coronavirus
- no one in your household has tested positive for coronavirus
- If you are volunteering in a workplace, it should meet coronavirus safety standards.

If you are clinically extremely vulnerable, you can volunteer from home. You're advised to not volunteer outside your home.

Do not volunteer outside your home if you have coronavirus symptoms or if you have tested positive for coronavirus. You must self-isolate for at least 10 days from the date you started having symptoms or from the day you tested positive - whichever is the latest.

If you are self-isolating:

you cannot leave home (or the place where you are self-isolating) to volunteer

your volunteer organisation should not ask you to leave home (or the place where you are self-isolating)

Travelling to volunteer or while volunteering

You are allowed to travel in order to volunteer or while volunteering.

You should walk or cycle where possible. If you need to use public transport, avoid busy times and routes and follow the safer travel guidance. This includes the travel rules on social distancing, wearing face coverings and advice on car sharing.

Volunteering with others

While volunteering, you can meet in groups of any size from different households, indoors or outdoors. When meeting people from outside your household or support bubble, you should follow social distancing guidelines.

Wearing face coverings while volunteering

You must wear a face covering by law in some public places unless you have a reasonable excuse for not wearing one. For example, if you have an illness, impairment or a disability.

Staff and volunteers in retail, hospitality and leisure settings must also wear a face covering.

You should also wear a face covering indoors if you will be in:

- an enclosed public space
- a place where you cannot stay 1 metre apart from other people
- a place where you will come into contact with people you do not usually meet

Safeguarding and DBS: FAQs

What if I have a criminal record? Will that stop me from volunteering?

If you have a criminal record you can still volunteer for most roles. If you are asked by the volunteer organiser for a DBS check for your volunteering role, you can discuss anything that is disclosed on the certificate with them.

The only people who are legally prevented from volunteering with children and vulnerable adults are those who have been barred from doing so. If you have been barred by the DBS, you will have been informed by DBS, so you will know you have been barred and from what type of work. If you have been barred by DBS from certain types of work, then you would be committing an offence by trying to do that work.

Do I need a DBS check if I'm helping with personal care, such as washing and dressing

If you are helping in this way for a friend or family member, then you don't apply for a DBS check. However, it is not expected that community volunteers will be offering personal care to strangers. These activities should be provided by professionals.

If someone requires that type of personal care and they don't have the necessary services in place, you should help them to contact the appropriate health and social care services.

My DBS check has recently expired. Do I need to apply for a new one?

As DBS checks do not have an expiry date, you should speak with the organisation that you are going to be working or volunteering for. They may choose to accept the check that you already have.

Do I need a DBS check if I'm helping with medical care?

If someone you are supporting requires medical care, and they don't have the necessary services already in place, you should help them to contact the appropriate health or social care services.

Medical care should be provided by professionals, or specialist volunteers with the appropriate skills, training and checks.



All charities will need help

Lots of volunteering now for all sorts of charities is done by people who may not be able to volunteer right now. But if older people in particular are advised to stay at home, the organisations that rely on them will be hit.

So now is actually a really good time to get in touch with local charities working on areas you care about – whether that's the environment or health or anything – and see how you can help.

Obviously charities are really stretched at the moment in the same way everyone is so you might not get a reply straight away. But get in touch and offer your details and say what you can help with.

Could people be using this as a way to abuse vulnerable or older people?

99.9% of people absolutely want to do the right thing – but the sad reality is there are always a handful of people who'll exploit any situation.

That's the reason why charities have things in place like criminal records checks and references.

We're doing what we can to support groups that are setting up to make sure they are safe and effective - but we have to be aware that some of them have limited expertise or experience or procedures in what they're doing.

Further Support Available

Our friendly staff at the County Durham Volunteering Centre will be happy to offer you practical help including:

- Arranging a confidential one to one interview with a trained volunteer adviser to find out what opportunities may be available
- Providing you with information about volunteering and current opportunities
- Helping you to fill out any paperwork that may be required

Get in touch with the County

Durham Volunteering Centre

Our staff are currently remotely working from home but we are still here to support and can be contacted by the details below.

Tel: 07960210665

Website: www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

Email: volunteering@durhamcommunityaction.org.uk

