

Guidance on safe volunteering during COVID-19

Please note this guidance is current at time of publication. To keep up to date visit the ['How to help safely'](#) guidance and [Enabling safe and effective volunteering during coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) guidance.

Who can volunteer?

Where possible, you should volunteer from home. If you cannot do so, you can volunteer outside your home providing that you follow the [social distancing guidance](#), and:

- you're well
- nobody in your household has [coronavirus symptoms](#)
- you have not been told to self-isolate by NHS Test and Trace or the NHS COVID-19 app

If you are [over 60 or clinically vulnerable](#) you can volunteer from home. If you cannot do so, you can volunteer outside your home. However, as you could be at higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus, you should be especially careful to follow [social distancing guidance](#) and minimise contact with others.

If you are [clinically extremely vulnerable](#) you can volunteer from home. You are advised not to volunteer outside your home.

If you live with someone who is over 70, clinically vulnerable, or extremely clinically vulnerable, consider their needs before volunteering outside your home.

How can I keep myself safe while volunteering?

The [Coronavirus: How to help safely guidance](#) states that you must follow the Government's [social distancing guidance](#). If you do not follow this advice, you could put yourself at risk of infection, or risk spreading it to others.

Workplaces should make every reasonable effort to ensure their employees and volunteers can work safely. From 1 August 2020, this may be working from home, or within the workplace if [COVID-19 secure guidelines](#) are followed closely and this includes a risk assessment. When in the workplace, everyone should make every reasonable effort to comply with the social distancing guidelines set out by the government (2m, or 1m with risk mitigation where 2m is not viable).'

Whether you choose to volunteer will depend on the type of activities you would like to do, and the risks associated with that for you as an individual. We recommend that you check [guidance on how to manage the risk of coronavirus](#) before you volunteer. If you volunteer via an organisation you should also contact them for advice on if it is safe for you to volunteer.

The 9 point checklist has been developed to lower the risk of the spread of infection, to protect yourselves and others in all situations:

1. **Only volunteer if you fulfil the conditions set out**
2. **Wash your hands** regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use hand sanitiser, in accordance with the detailed notes and illustration guide below.
3. **Do not enter people's homes whilst volunteering in the community.**
4. **Clean surfaces** regularly as they may be contaminated.

5. Follow [social distancing](#) rules at all times.
6. Do not take unnecessary risks.
7. Report any concerns – see detailed guidance below.
8. Respect and protect personal privacy.
9. Carry ID where possible.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- Personal Protective Equipment is **not required** for most volunteering roles, such as delivering medication or food. Guidance on self-isolation, social distancing (maintaining a 2-metre distance from others at all times), tissue etiquette and handwashing/hand hygiene must be strictly followed. If your volunteering role is different you will be advised if you need PPE and how to use it.
- You must wear a face covering in any enclosed public space where there are people you do not normally meet. There are also settings where you must wear a face covering by law. [A full list of where you must wear a face covering in England](#) and how to make one is available on gov.uk.

Handwashing ([See handwashing illustration](#))

- Hands must be washed regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, and always in the following situations. Use hand sanitiser with at least 60% alcohol only if soap and water are not available.
 - When you arrive at and before you leave a setting (i.e. home, supermarket) including your place of volunteering
 - On entering any area where food is being handled
 - Before and after handling any food
 - In between tasks
 - Before and after handling and opening packaging, money, receipts and cleaning supplies
 - Between deliveries to houses
 - After touching anything that residents, other volunteers, or delivery drivers may have contaminated, such as doorbells, handrails and door handles
 - After cleaning
 - Always after using the toilet or going into the toilet areas
 - After touching your face, sneezing, coughing and blowing your nose
 - After smoking
 - Any time hands are contaminated
 - After touching rubbish

Tissue etiquette

- Carry disposable tissues with you at all times in case of sneezing or coughing
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or use the crook of your arm (elbow), not hands, when coughing or sneezing
- Always put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth, particularly with unwashed hands

Cleaning Surfaces

- Clean all surfaces before and after activities including high touch areas such as door handles, telephones, desks and computer keyboards

- Drivers delivering packages should clean the common touch points in their car (steering wheel, gear stick, radio, door and boot handles, window and seat belt mechanisms, for example) before they start deliveries and when they finish

Respect and protect personal privacy

You may come into contact with and use confidential personal information about people such as names and addresses or even information about a customer's circumstances, families, health or other private matters. You must not disclose any personal data to others. You must only use the data for the purpose for which it has been given.

Please be mindful of the organisations you are representing and the people you are supporting before posting anything on social media. You must not share personal details on social media.

Volunteers and the people you help are entitled to receive the same treatment regardless of their gender, culture, sexual orientation, marital status, age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, disability or background. We ask and encourage you to treat all other volunteers, staff, and people you support equally and with respect.

Reporting concerns

If anyone is in immediate danger, please contact 999.

Adults

If someone is at risk or appears to have care and support needs that are not being met, for example they are struggling to keep themselves clean or prepare food - contact the Hampshire Coronavirus Support and Helpline on **0333 370 4000**.

If someone is at risk of neglect or abuse - contact Hampshire Adult Services' Referrals and Enquiries **0300 555 1386**. For out of hours referral contact **0300 555 1373**.

You should be aware to look out for signs such as domestic abuse, drug or alcohol misuse and decline in mental wellbeing and report any concerns to **0300 555 1386**.

Children

If you believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm, neglect or injury, report your concerns to **0300 555 1384**. For further information and guidance please visit <https://www.hampshirescp.org.uk/>

Free e-learning

New free e-learning available on the Connect to Support Hampshire website for volunteers, informal carers and anyone whose work in the community involves contact with potentially vulnerable people. The training provides a simple toolkit based on the risks and concerns which you may have when you visit or speak to someone.

The training covers working with all adult groups. It is not a risk-assessment tool. It is an awareness-raising and confidence-building tool covering the basics in three broad areas: safe at home, physical and mental health, and supporting independence. It also includes a helpful resource section at the end with links to more information, advice and support services.

Find the training [here](#). *Please note: The above link will only work in Microsoft Edge if you have the latest [chromium version](#) installed. Alternatively, you can also switch to using another browser such as Firefox, Safari or Google Chrome.*

Delivering food parcels

- On arrival park as close to the property as possible but safely.
- Ensure you lift any items safely
- Ring doorbell or knock following the process requested by the individual (knock loudly, wait patiently due to low mobility)
- Leave the items on the doorstep. (There may also be a chair or table left out for those who cannot bend down to ground level)
- Step back at least 2 metres
- Confirm with the recipient that the parcel is their delivery as arranged. (Some parcels will be designed for the recipient to ensure their dietary or nutritional needs are catered for. It is important they receive the correct parcel)
- Advise recipient to collect and take the parcel inside

Collecting and delivering medication

Collection

- We recommend where possible that you pick up prescriptions from pharmacies in batches
- To avoid the potential for confusion, you must also complete all deliveries from a single pharmacy before picking up further prescriptions or delivery from another pharmacy
- Be prepared to provide your ID at the pharmacy
- If you are required to queue, lead by example and keep a 2-metre distance from others.
- Please ensure all packages are sealed and labelled
- Check name and address details on the collected prescriptions to ensure that they match the details of the intended recipients on your list
- Store the packets securely and don't leave medication in view in a vehicle
- Prioritise any deliveries that may contain an item requiring cold storage. If delivery cannot be fulfilled for such an item, ensure that it is returned promptly to the pharmacy

Delivery

- Do not enter houses
- Ring doorbell or knock following the process requested by the individual (knock loudly, wait patiently due to low mobility)
- Stand at least 2 metres away
- If the recipient does not come to the door, remember to wait for someone who has low mobility to get to the door. You can also ring their contact number if no answer
- Verify you are at the correct address by knocking without asking for the recipient by name and stating 'pharmacy delivery, can you confirm your name/name of the person expecting delivery?'
- Ask the recipient to close the door before placing the medication on the doorstep and stand at least 2 metres away (There may also be a chair or table left out for those who cannot bend down to ground level)
- If delivery is not successful, **you must** return the prescription to the pharmacy before it closes. You must not keep the prescription to reattempt delivery at a later date. Be aware of the pharmacy closing times

- Undelivered prescriptions must not be held overnight in volunteers/team personal homes, in an office or within the vehicle
- **Under no circumstances** may prescriptions be posted through the letter box, as it becomes irretrievable if a mistaken address is made and maybe harmful to any pets, children or vulnerable people within the household
- Confirm with your organiser that deliveries have been completed
- DO NOT offer any advice or instructions on the use of the medicine (including over the counter medicines) – the recipient should be encouraged to contact the pharmacy if they have any queries
- Only deliver over the counter medicines which are within the maximum amount able to be purchased by any one person – e.g. Box of 32 paracetamol. Excess orders should not be obtained or delivered
- DO NOT take any financial payment for delivery of the prescription/medication. Any payment required must be directly from the recipient to pharmacy via telephone card payment.

Driving passengers

Public Health England [guidance on safe travel](#) states that you must not share the car with someone from outside your household or your [support bubble](#) unless your journey is undertaken for a [legally permitted reason](#). It is difficult to socially distance during car journeys, therefore the risks associated with that for you as an individual should be considered.

NHS England [guidance](#) for patient transport services (PTS) recognises the role of voluntary organisations in providing patient transport services. Volunteers are often focused on creating positive experiences for patients being transported and can help make patients feel more comfortable.

Without the continued efforts of voluntary organisations, some vulnerable people may not have access to essential services. Many organisations are now working differently to support individuals to stay at home, such as food and prescription deliveries to remote clinical appointments. There may be occasions where essential journeys need to be made. All alternative arrangements must be explored before transport is agreed.

Where journeys are deemed essential, the following steps are recommended:

- You must not transport someone with possible or confirmed COVID-19 illness.
- Wear a single use disposable surgical mask.
- Masks must be changed when soiled, uncomfortable, wet, damaged or during a break.
- Avoid touching the front of the mask, if this is required hand hygiene must be carried out immediately after.
- The person you are transporting must wear a [face covering](#) unless exempt
- Avoid touching the face covering/mask, if this is required hand hygiene must be carried out immediately after.
- Ensure good ventilation where possible by keeping the windows open and the fan on extraction rather than re-circulation.
- Put disposable seat covers on top of seats that are mainly covered in cloth or absorbent material.
- Clean all contact points after each journey with a detergent wipe:
 - door handles (inside and out)
 - window switches
 - grab handles

- seat facings
- Maintain social distancing of 2 metres where possible (individual to travel in the back seat of the vehicle, diagonally from the driver).
- When finishing each journey, you and your passenger should wash your hands for at least 20 seconds or sanitise your hands as soon as possible.
- Further guidance for [putting on](#) and [taking off](#) PPE is provided where an individual requires assistance to get in or out of a car. It is important that where PPE is used, it is used safely.

Used PPE should be double bagged within disposable rubbish bags, tied securely, and set aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual external household bin for non-recyclable waste.

If you use your own vehicle for volunteer driving:

- contact your insurer to find out if you are covered by your regular motor insurance policy
- include your volunteer driving miles when declaring your annual mileage to your insurer

If you use a voluntary organisation's vehicle for volunteer driving:

- you should be covered by the voluntary organisation's insurance, but always check with each organisation to be sure.

Handling money and payments

- Do not allow anyone to give their bank card to anyone else for any reason
- Encourage residents to order and pay online / over the phone so that only collection and delivery is needed
- Explore options such as pre-paid volunteer shopping cards
- Avoid handling cash and especially large amounts
- Arrange with your volunteer co-ordinator for cashless payment arrangements using payment cards or arrangements for recouping payments

Dog walking and feeding pets

If you are exercising a dog for someone who cannot leave the household always wash your hands before and after handling the dog and keep 2 metres away from other people and animals, including when handing over the dog to the owner. Please note that it is standard practice for dog walkers to have public liability insurance.