

Covid-19

Volunteers Good Practice Guide for those coordinating volunteers

And

Volunteer Code of Conduct

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Purpose

To provide those coordinating volunteers / volunteering with a common approach, in order to:

- Maximise opportunity for interoperability between volunteer groups
- Minimise exposure to risk for all stakeholders

Organisations who regularly coordinate volunteers will already have these in place, and we have sought to incorporate that good practice within this document.

Sources

- Manchester University - Guidelines for involving volunteers in the response to Covid-19;
- Volunteer Essex guidance documents;
- Guidance for Planning the Involvement of Spontaneous Volunteers in Emergencies (2016);
- ERF Spontaneous Volunteers Policy & Toolkit;
- ISO 22319:2017 - Security and resilience — Community resilience — Guidelines for planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers

Good Practice Guidelines

Assign Lead Responsibility

Organisations/Groups coordinating volunteers should appoint a Senior Responsible Officer (Volunteer Coordinator)

Role:

- Lead the volunteering effort, overseeing the processing and involvement of volunteers
- Have a sound understanding of the nature of the crisis and what may be required
- Link with the wider crisis response system, for coordination & avoidance of duplication of effort

Responsibilities:

- Monitor government guidance and ensure that staff/volunteers adhere to them
- Oversee the implementation of a risk appropriate volunteer recruitment & stand down process
- Assess the risk to staff, volunteers, and vulnerable people from the tasks that volunteers deliver and identify risk reduction measures. Monitor for changes in risk.
- Ensure that volunteers have appropriate supervision and that Supervisors are aware of their own responsibilities
- Ensure operational priorities and a Code of Conduct are shared with all staff and volunteers
- Put guidance in place to withdraw volunteers if required, e.g. they show signs of being unwell, do not follow the Code of Conduct, should self-isolate etc.
- Ensure Health & Safety and safeguarding policy is applied
- Ensure clear financial responsibilities and processes in place
- Ensure business continuity plans are in place for loss of staff, buildings/utilities and volunteers

Clarify Insurance & Liability

Provide a clear statement on liability. Generally, volunteers acting under the direction of an organisation will be covered under that organisation's liability insurance policy, so long as they do not act outside of the guidance/task given to them.

Implement Processes

Proportionate and scalable processes should be used to involve volunteers, including processes:

- To recruit volunteers, including appropriate identification and safeguarding checks
- To conduct/provide assurance of Enhanced DBS checks (if undertaking [regulated activity](#)) and/or other/additional safe recruitment process as required
- To register, train, supervise, monitor, debrief, log in/out, and thank volunteers
- To assess the ongoing needs of vulnerable people and direct resources to address those needs – seeking additional resources and making referrals to other agencies where required
- To handle payments for goods
- To cover clear policy regarding any donations/gifts received
- To reimburse expenses incurred by volunteers, if appropriate
- To record vulnerable people who are not on any list but who become known to the volunteer centre
- That align with Cabinet Office guidelines on [involving volunteers in emergencies](#)

Provide Direction for Volunteers

Ensure that volunteers:

- Agree to the Code of Conduct, and keep records of this agreement
- Are aware that they may be personally liable if they do not follow the training/instruction given, Code of Conduct and safeguarding measures
- Have a defined role and task to deliver which matches their capability
- Are rostered to ensure sufficient cover
- Can gain advice from a designated contact if they have difficulties or need to share concerns
- Are given sufficient training to conduct their task, including specific Covid-19 awareness and safeguarding training
- Understand the policy for volunteers handling money or receiving gifts
- Are debriefed to identify any concerns for the vulnerable people they have supported
- Are welfare checked to check how they feel about their volunteering and are signposted to where they can get additional welfare support
- Who are furloughed by their employer do not provide services to that employer through their volunteering
- Are empowered to refuse tasks if they have any concerns

Monitor and Evaluate

Processes should be in place to:

- To track the delivery of activities by volunteers
- To identify strains on the system as volunteer numbers increase and decrease
- To monitor the speed of DBS checking of volunteers where required
- To monitor the PPE needed for specific tasks, and ensure the availability of that PPE
- Maintain appropriate records and report on performance e.g. of number of vulnerable people, volunteers, tasks delivered, hours worked, feedback
- To evaluate the experience of service users/vulnerable people
- To evaluate the experience of volunteers

Communications

Ensure that:

- Recognition and reward to volunteers is applied equitably and effectively
- Processes in place to communicate with volunteers including the contributions they have made to supporting vulnerable people
- At the end of their volunteering, volunteers are thanked and their feedback recorded
- Signpost volunteers towards official voluntary sector organisations for future volunteering opportunities

Interoperability with other Volunteering Groups

The adoption of these guidelines and the Code of Conduct will enhance the ability to provide mutual aid between voluntary groups.

Where volunteers are to be shared between groups, each group is to:

- Understand the recruitment process of each group and adjust with further information/training as required.
- Agree the data to be shared about volunteers
- Agree the tasks volunteers will undertake, timeframe and supervision
- Ensure risk assessment and appropriate briefing is in place

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Thank you

Thank you for volunteering to help us work together as a community to support the most vulnerable during the Covid-19 crisis

This Code of Conduct is designed to keep both you and people in the community safe, familiarise yourself with the information and follow it.

Advice for Volunteers

There are some do's and don'ts which we need you to follow, outlined below. In general you must:

Aim to do only good – by not spreading the virus and not opening vulnerable people to other risks

Follow instructions you have been given, including this Code of Conduct, safeguarding expectations and the law; delivering only the tasks allocated and not your own priorities or beliefs

Look after your own welfare; inform us when you are/are not available and take regular breaks. Help is available for you if needed, see below

Seek advice from your designated contact if you have difficulties or concerns when completing your task (and especially if you are concerned for the health, well-being or safeguarding of someone you visit) The phone number to call is **[insert phone number here]**

If a vulnerable person needs more help than you have been tasked to give, ask them to contact the Local Authority on **[insert phone number here]** and inform your Volunteer Manager

Support for You

If you feel stressed or concerned about your role, we can offer you support, please contact us at: **[insert phone/website etc. number here]**

DO

Practice infection control measures/advice as instructed, including social distancing (more than 2 meters apart) and wearing PPE (where advised)

Visibly display your identification

Be courteous, recognise vulnerable people may be stressed and anxious

Respect people's needs, culture and customs

Conduct tasks allocated to you, such as food shopping, delivering medicines, telephone support, dog walking etc.

Maintain confidentiality

If using your own vehicle, ensure this is done so safely and legally

Carry your mobile phone and ensure someone knows where you are going

DON'T

Continue volunteering within the community if you develop symptoms. Self-isolate in line with Government guidance

Go into people's houses

Take any payment for services or goods provided, unless following specific instructions given to you by us

Offer advice on benefits

Fill in forms on their behalf

Request any personal or financial information about the people you visit

Offer services beyond those instructions you have received, including childcare or personal care for example

Contact or meet vulnerable people, except for the specific purpose of undertaking the tasks you have been given during your period of volunteering

Share any personal information you have been entrusted with in your volunteering role, including posting any information on social media relating to vulnerable people, staff or other volunteers