

Volunteering Guide for Community Groups & Volunteers



With the current situation of COVID-19 there are a number of volunteering roles that local VCF groups can assist with e.g.

- Shopping
- Gardening
- Postage mail
- Taking bins out or recycling
- Collecting prescriptions
- Dog walking
- Telephone befriender

Due to some volunteers working with older people or vulnerable adults and that there may be the handling of cash through shopping this role is classified as a regulated activity role so a Disclosing and Barring Service Check or background checks will be necessary if you do not currently have one and are not signed up to the update service.

Due to COVID-19 we are only asking people who are physically well and able to carry out these tasks to volunteer due to the current pandemic.

Important information related to COVID-19: Please remember:

- Before volunteering wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds. Take sanitiser gel with you and use as and when appropriate when you don't have access to soap and water and washing facilities
- Always wash your hands when you get home from volunteering
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the nearest bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

When helping individuals please only offer to help for the tasks you feel comfortable doing and are able to do. Volunteers helping local people need to make sure that if they become unwell themselves they **MUST** not volunteer. Volunteers need to protect themselves and not put other people at risk.

Remember to keep up to date about Coronavirus-Covid 19. Please visit:

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

Also please read and follow these guidelines from the government regarding social-distancing.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-social-distancing-and-for-vulnerable-people>

1. Volunteer Roles

a. Induction of Volunteers

All new Volunteers should be supported to ensure they fully understand their volunteer role and the boundaries which need to be put in place due to COVID-19.

b. Sickness reporting

Volunteers should notify their local organiser as soon as possible if they are ill in general or have symptoms of COVID-19.

Anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home for at least 7 days. If you live with other people, they should stay at home for at least 14 days, to avoid spreading the infection outside the home. After 14 days, anyone you live with who does not have symptoms can return to their normal routine.

But, if anyone in your home gets symptoms, they should stay at home for 7 days from the day their symptoms start. Even if it means they're at home for longer than 14 days.

Do keep your organiser informed of progress and expected date of return. This enables us to cover absence.

c. Insurance

Volunteers are covered by the local community groups public liability insurance. Volunteers are required to carry out their role in a safe manner. Owner-drivers must inform their insurance company in writing if they will be driving in a voluntary capacity. Volunteers are only covered for tasks that they are authorised to do.

d. Travel expenses

Due to the high volume of individuals accessing support from volunteers we are unable to cover volunteer expenses, e.g. travel. We are looking for volunteers from the local community who may already be doing their own shopping or errands and can offer to do this for someone else who may live near by. We know it is good practice to re-imburse travel expenses for volunteers but our budget does not allow us to do so with the current pandemic.

e. Emergency and First Aid

All accidents you have should be reported and recorded promptly to the local organiser.

2. Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment is a method of assessing the risks and hazards which are posed in certain situations and the safety measures which should be put in place to minimise these risks whilst volunteering.

a. Volunteers' personal safety and lone working

Volunteers should:

- Avoid any direct face to face social contact with older people or vulnerable people you are supporting
- Discuss with the person you are supporting the best way to exchange money and shopping lists to avoid human contact

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- Ensure before and after your volunteering you wash your hands with soap and water or use hand gel
- Always park your vehicle in a safe place and keep locked at all times
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear
- Wear seat belts at all times if driving to collect shopping
- Ensure your mobile phone is charged in case of an emergency

You have the responsibility to ensure that you follow procedures and that you do not knowingly put yourself at risk of harm in the course of your duties.

If you have any concerns about your own safety please contact your Organiser.

b. Clients' personal safety

When supporting older people or vulnerable people through COVID-19 you are likely to telephone them before you visit them to find out what help they may need and when you will be visiting. This is also to minimise any social interaction with the older person you are supporting which you must avoid due to the Government guidelines of older people self-isolating. You need to be aware if:

- the individual is becoming anxious/aggressive
- the individual is more confused than normal
- there are potential safeguarding issues

If you have any concerns about an individual you are supporting you should report it to your Organiser who will inform the proper authorities.

Your organiser will make you aware of your Volunteer Risk assessment which covers all potentially tasks or activities you may be asked to do for COVID-19 related volunteering opportunities.

c. Gifts, gratuities and bequests

Volunteers should not accept gifts, gratuities and bequests from clients, their family or friends. If the situation arises then volunteers must explain that it's their role to support individual clients and therefore it is not appropriate to accept personal gifts for services provided, though the gesture is appreciated.

3. Health & safety

In compliance with the Health & Safety at Work Act 1974 (HASAWA) and all relevant Health & Safety Regulations, it is the policy of organisations to seek to provide a safe and healthy place and work environment for all, and to enlist the active support of all individuals in achieving these ends. To achieve this effectively, your organisation, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Provide safe premises and systems of work

- Provide safe and healthy working conditions
- Ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to undertake their tasks and to give them adequate training and advice;
- Provide information, instruction, training and support in safety matters

a. Duty of volunteers

The Health & Safety at Work Act also lays down certain duties on all individuals operating within the organisation. In particular, individuals have a duty to:

- Work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or the general public
- Adhere to the safety procedures laid down by the organisation
- Report all accidents, near miss occurrences and hazardous situations to the appropriate person(s)
- Meet their other statutory safety obligations including that laid down in Section 8 of the Act, which states that no person shall intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare in pursuance of any of the relevant statutory provisions

b. Manual handling

Whilst doing activities such as moving recycle bins or gardening, your organiser will provide instruction in how to be safe when manual handling to ensure that Volunteers' health and safety are not put at risk.

3. Safeguarding

a. What is 'Adult Safeguarding'?

- The function of protecting adults from abuse or neglect
- The need to protect certain people who may be in vulnerable circumstances
- These are adults in need of care and support, who may be at risk of abuse or neglect, due to the actions (or lack of actions) of another person

All vulnerable adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. The organisation is committed to safeguarding from harm all vulnerable adults using any of its services and involved in any of its activities, and to treating them with respect.

b. What is abuse?

A person may abuse a vulnerable adult by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Vulnerable adults may be abused in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger.

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- Physical abuse may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm or ill health.
- Emotional abuse is the persistent emotional ill-treatment of a vulnerable adult such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the victim's emotional development or self-esteem.
- Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a vulnerable adult to take part in sexual activities, whether or not the victim is aware of what is happening.
- Neglect is the persistent failure to meet a vulnerable adult's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of their health or development, such as failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, or neglect of, or unresponsiveness to basic emotional needs.
- Financial abuse is particularly relevant to vulnerable adults and may include theft, fraud, exploitation and pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions.

Volunteers have responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of vulnerable adults they support.

c. Reporting Potential Abuse

It is important that any concerns regarding potential or actual abuse, or a lack of care of vulnerable adults from other carers, family members, neighbours, etc, is reported immediately to your organiser. We appreciate as there will be minimal face to face contact with older people and vulnerable people this may be difficult to highlight but sometimes during telephone conversations when you may get to know individuals you are supporting more this may become more evident.

If you think a vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed then you should always contact the police on 999.

If individuals are not in immediate danger but you need to report any issues or concerns in confidence without fear of retribution for situations such as suspicion of fraud, abuse or inappropriate behaviour then it must be reported to your Organiser who will then liaise with their designated Safe Guarding Officer who will then contact the Local Area Offices:

The Area Contact will pass on reported concerns to the Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Team who will make a decision regarding the best course of action. In certain circumstances another appropriate authority may need to be involved, e.g. Adult Social Care, Police, Health and Safety Executive, etc. If this is the case their involvement will be coordinated by the Cumbria Safeguarding Adults Team.

For emergencies **outside normal office hours**, please contact the Emergency Duty Team (Adult Social Care) **01228 526690**.

4. Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and service users 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 encourage you to treat all other Volunteers, staff, and people you support equally and with respect.

a. Confidentiality

The organisation's confidentiality practices and procedures are underpinned by legislation including Article 8 of the Human Rights Act. We are committed to best practices and will act responsibly and with integrity when handling personal information and data.

- Confidential information is information entrusted by an individual in confidence, where there is general obligation not to disclose that information without consent.
- Information will be disclosed to those who have a legitimate need to know in order to fulfil their key tasks.
- Confidential information may include personal information such as name, age, address, and personal contact details and circumstances, , etc.

An accepted principle is that all personal information must be treated as confidential so we ask then when you are supporting individuals you do not disclose this to others and on social media to protect the interests and safety of vulnerable people.

b. Data Protection

For the purposes of General Data Protection Regulations 2018, the data controller in respect of your personal data is (insert name of organisation). We hold personal data about all our volunteers. Your data will be used to administer your volunteering and will not be shared with any third party without your prior permission. Your data may be used for statistical purposes. The extent of the personal data will vary but may include contact details, DBS checks, medical information, etc. Our commitment is to respecting volunteers' rights in data protection law.

In the course of your volunteering 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. We ask you not to disclose any personal data to others. This is a breach of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, which has strict rules in this area.

c. Code of Conduct

Volunteers should follow the Code of Conduct, and behave in a reasonable manner at all times in terms of performing to required standards of behaviour and performance.

Volunteers are asked to inform the local organiser in advance if they will be unable to commit to their designated time/day to volunteer. This enables another volunteer to cover the tasks.

d. Complaints

(insert name of organisation) aims to provide a service of a standard which is acceptable to all our users and individuals we support. If we fail to do this, we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also to avoid it happening again. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

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- dissatisfaction with our service, unacceptable delay or failure to deliver a service to someone in need etc
- discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of the volunteers
- dishonesty of volunteers

e. Fraud/Theft

A concern of older people or vulnerable people is the risk of fraud or being taken advantage of by some very few dishonest people. In order to minimise risk DBS checks will be carried out on volunteers but individuals receiving support will also be asked to report concerns of fraud, theft, etc.

Individuals receiving support will be asked to cross-reference shopping with receipts and change of money to ensure goods have been received appropriately. If there are any concerns the Organiser will discuss any problems or issues with volunteers. If necessary volunteers will be asked to leave or reported to the police depending on the situation. This is in extreme cases as our team of volunteers are caring, friendly and have true empathy for helping those in need.

f. Compliments

Any feedback received from individuals should be shared with the local organisers. Positive feedback can be used to promote the difference Volunteers make in this service to encourage others to volunteer and we can share feedback and experiences.

g. Exit Procedures for Volunteers

We hope you will continue as a volunteer but know that at some point your volunteering role will come to an end. When you decide that you wish to leave then this should be discussed with your local organiser, in case there are any steps we can take that will enable you to continue.

However, we understand that it is inevitable that Volunteers will leave as individual circumstances do change.

As a Volunteer you can expect:

- A supportive and positive environment that ensures you enjoy your volunteering experience
- To be treated with respect and courtesy
- To be treated fairly regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background
- A named contact for support
- Relevant and up to date information and advice
- Recognition and thanks
- Equal opportunities

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- Adequate public liability insurance
- Respect to your right to privacy and that of your contacts

In return we ask that you:

- Support our aims and objectives
- Remember that you are a representative of (Insert name of organisation)
- Be clear about the time and commitment you can give
- Meet time and duty commitments, except in exceptional circumstances, or to provide adequate notice so that alternative arrangements can be made
- Be open and honest in your dealings with us
- Treat fellow volunteers and staff with courtesy and respect
- Let us know if you wish to change the nature of your contribution
- Let us know if we can improve the service and support that you receive

For help and support or to contact your local Hub call 0161 253 5353.

To register as a volunteer or more information call VCFA on 0161 518 5550
<https://www.buryvcfa.org.uk/volunteering/>