

## Coronavirus (COVID-19): a guide for VCSE organisations

### What is COVID 19?

A coronavirus is a type of virus that are common across the world, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new strain of coronavirus.

Typical symptoms of coronavirus include fever and a cough that may progress to a severe pneumonia causing shortness of breath and breathing difficulties.

Generally, coronavirus can cause more severe symptoms in people with weakened immune systems, older people, and those with long-term conditions like diabetes, cancer and chronic lung disease.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19 acute respiratory disease. The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus (see tips below).

### What is the risk level?

The Chief Medical Officers have declared that the risk of the virus is moderate, this does not reflect the risk to individuals but ensures that government, local authorities and NHS organisations are planning for all eventualities.

The current situation is that there is a very small risk to most people, although there are some obvious exceptions which are outlined below. The advice is changing almost daily, the VCSE support organisations in your area will continue to work with Public Health England, their local authority and NHS organisations to share timely and relevant information with the public and our partners.

The advice from Public Health England, NHS England and Local Authorities is that we **continue with our regular activities and follow the prevention advice** that follows:

### What is the best way of preventing the spread?

There are general principles you can follow to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses, including:

- **Wash your hands often** - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. This is particularly important after taking public transport
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands**
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick**
- **If you feel unwell, stay at home, do not attend work or school**
- **Cover your cough or sneeze** with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin.  
Download the NHS [‘Catch it, Bin it, Kill it’ poster here.](#)
- **Clean and disinfect** frequently touched objects and surfaces in the home and work environment

If you are worried about your symptoms, please call NHS 111 or visit the [NHS website](#).

**Do not go directly to your GP or other healthcare environment.**

## What can our a VCF do?

We are aware that there are small, medium and large organisations that may be affected by Coronavirus. The impact of the virus will vary depending how far it spreads and how many people are affected, it will also depend on what your organisation does and who your beneficiaries are.

The general advice given offers some pointers and you should discuss these within your organisation or with your local VCSE support organisation.

### 1. Infection control

You should consider introducing some simple measures to control risk of infection; this should include making sure there is soap and water to wash hands, providing antibacterial hand gel (70% alcohol content), displaying posters regarding correct handwashing techniques, and the [Catch it, Kill it, Bin it poster](#).

We advise that where possible people who have a cough, a temperature or are sneezing do not come to work or attend meetings until they are feeling well, this will protect against a variety of illnesses. You will know the best way to talk to your beneficiaries, teams and people using your services about this.

You can download posters here:

- [Hand washing technique poster](#)
- [‘Catch it, bin it, kill it’ poster](#)

### 2. Business continuity planning

We suggest that you should plan for keeping your organisation running in the event of a range of emergencies. A simple plan may include:

- The emergency contact details for your team and members in case you need to close, who needs to know?
- Having processes in place to allow home working should the need arise. If your building is closed or your team have to isolate themselves how will you continue to operate?
- How you support members / beneficiaries by phone rather than face to face
- What difficulties and issues will arise if your team are off sick, and how will you manage them?
- How you will manage expectations of members, beneficiaries, and stakeholders including commissioners?

### 3. Supporting communities in an emergency

Each of the 10 boroughs of Greater Manchester have a plan for what happens should there be an emergency and VCSE organisations are involved in many ways, often providing support for people in their communities. We encourage you to think about how you could help in an emergency and contact your local VCSE support organisation to discuss this. Currently VCSE organisations provide a range of services in an emergency; these include making cups of tea, running emergency shelters, counselling, shopping services, befriending, etc.

#### 4. Guidance on holding events

- If you are planning events which will bring together large numbers of people, keep your plans under review and check current advice from Public Health England and your Local Authority
- If your events depend on volunteers, be aware that some may prefer to stay home
- Some of your service beneficiaries may be more at risk or highly concerned about the virus. This may deter attendance at events
- Ensure that you provide hand washing facilities (hot water and soap) and encourage people to wash their hands
- If you are hosting a formal meeting, such as an AGM, plan for reduced attendance or the need to move location and / or time of the meeting
- Refer to your organisation's governing document to see what it says about remote participation and quorum
- Check cancellation policies for venue bookings you've made or are about to make

We have been advised that the guidance is ever changing so please see below the links we have been provided which will have live updates from a national level and direct people to them if any questions occur:

- Anyone who is concerned that they might have caught coronavirus should either use the NHS111 online service (<https://111.nhs.uk/service/covid-19>) or call NHS 111.
- Guidance for a wide range of settings can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>
- There might not be one specific guidance document relevant to each organisation, but aspects of the non-clinical guidance are likely to be helpful, such as:
  - Guidance for businesses: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/guidance-for-employers-and-businesses-on-covid-19>
  - Guidance for social or community care and residential settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19/guidance-for-social-or-community-care-and-residential-settings-on-covid-19>
  - Guidance on decontamination in non-clinical settings: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings/covid-19-decontamination-in-non-healthcare-settings>
- As this guidance is changing rapidly, we would encourage people to refer back to the website when they have queries.

#### **Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Support Organisations**

Please contact one of the below organisations if you're looking for support in other boroughs of Greater Manchester:

Greater Manchester:

- 10GM - [www.10gm.org.uk](http://www.10gm.org.uk)
- GMCVO - [www.gmcvo.org.uk](http://www.gmcvo.org.uk)
- Bolton: Bolton CVS - [www.boltoncvs.org.uk](http://www.boltoncvs.org.uk)
- Bury: Bury Voluntary, Community and Faith Alliance (VCFA) - [www.buryvcfa.org.uk](http://www.buryvcfa.org.uk)
- Manchester: Manchester Community Central - [www.manchestercommunitycentral.org](http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org)
- Salford: Salford CVS - [www.salfordcvs.co.uk](http://www.salfordcvs.co.uk)
- Stockport: Sector 3 - <http://synergysk.co.uk>
- Trafford: Thrive Trafford - [www.thrivetrafford.org.uk](http://www.thrivetrafford.org.uk)
- Wigan: Wigan Borough Community Partnership - [www.wbcommunitypartnership.org](http://www.wbcommunitypartnership.org)

**Prepared by 10GM on behalf of Bury VCFA**