

# COVID-19

Updated 23.03.20

This is a simple guide for individuals that are volunteering with local informal groups in their neighbourhoods or communities to support older or vulnerable people in their local area during COVID-19.

## **Informal volunteering**

Each informal group will be offering different volunteer opportunities but some examples of tasks may be shopping, collecting prescriptions, recycling, putting bins out, dog walking, posting mail, telephone befriending, handing out leaflets, etc.

## **Understanding social distancing and how this affects people aged over 70**

The Government has issued guidance for people within certain groups to start social distancing. One of these groups of people is people aged 70 and over (regardless of medical conditions). For more information see

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

## **Understanding guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable people from COVID-19**

The Government has issued guidance for people, including children, who are at very high risk of severe illness from coronavirus (COVID-19) because of an underlying health condition, and for their family, friends and carers. See:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

With older or vulnerable people needing to self-isolate or people who have COVID-19 they may need some essential shopping items. However, you **must** avoid face to face contact, minimise any contact and keep your distance by at least 2 metres. Do not go into their home.

**Social distancing shouldn't mean total isolation.**

### **Important basic hygiene information related to COVID-19 when volunteering:**

- Before volunteering wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds. Take sanitiser gel with you and use when needed if 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

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 **DO** not volunteer. Volunteers need to protect themselves and not put other people at risk.



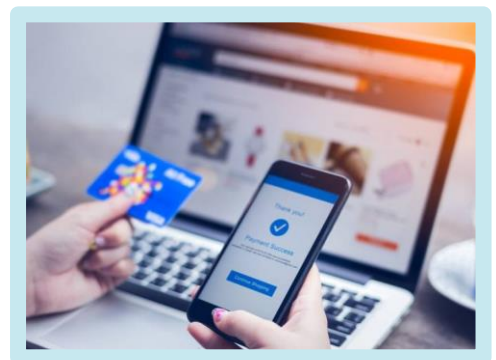
### **Help to protect vulnerable people:**

**PLEASE DO NOT ENCOURAGE VULNERABLE PEOPLE TO DISPLAY REQUESTS FOR HELP VIA NOTES OR CARDS IN THEIR WINDOWS/DOORS.** Criminals can take advantage of this.



### **Useful shopping tips for volunteers during COVID-19:**

When a person contacts you to ask if you can do shopping, you should discuss how the shopping will be paid for. Use online or telephone payment options where possible (so the person can pay directly themselves – this will also minimise the need to touch money). If you are paying for items yourself, use contactless payment options where you can. Consider if the person has any memory difficulties. It may be important to keep a record of what has been bought and the cost (e.g. can you take a photo of the receipt and keep a record of any money that is exchanged?).



020 8364 8400  
info@communitybarnet.org.uk  
www.communitybarnet.org.uk  
<https://www.facebook.com/CommUNITYBarnet/>  
<https://twitter.com/CommUNITYBarnet>

Consider where you will do the shopping. Is there a chance to support local business? Could they arrange for payment via telephone? Think about the person and their income – do you need to shop within a specific budget that will influence where you shop?

Consider others whilst shopping. Follow the advice on how to reduce your risk of catching or spreading the illness. Keep 2 metres away from other people at all times, including at the check-out.

Do not buy high-demand items in bulk – only buy what is needed.

If you need to consider substitutes, are you aware if the person or other household members have any allergies or are there foods they should not have because they may interact with medications? What sort of cooking and food storage facilities do they have? Would they be able to open tins/jars for example?

Transporting shopping – for food hygiene purposes, ensure any frozen food does not thaw before reaching the person's house (and check the person places in the freezer immediately if they are not planning to consume the food immediately). For food that should be refrigerated, such as raw/cooked meat; do not allow it to get too hot whilst being transport and make sure it is back in a fridge within two hours of picking from the shelf.

Delivering shopping to the person – where possible, we strongly advise volunteers not to enter homes. Keep a 2 metre distance from the person you are helping.

Agree a time and safe place to leave the shopping and ensure the person knows it is there.

Consider wearing disposable gloves and change them between deliveries if it is difficult to wash your hands regularly. Alternatively if sanitiser, hand washing facilities and gloves are not available, carry liquid hand soap, bottled water (preferably warm), paper towels and a bag for disposal, so you can wash your hands remotely.

If you need to handle money, ensure you and the person you are helping wash your hands before and after touching it. It is important to remember that if you can help an older person, neighbour or friend in need of help and both parties know each other (or via a trustworthy friend) then handling of cash is more safe as we do have concerns of vulnerable people exchanging cash with volunteers who they do not know. If the only option is to help someone and telephone or online shopping for payment is not an option then volunteers could telephone the person they are supporting before they go to their house so individuals know what time they are expected. This way, money could be left in an envelope with a list of the shopping needed



Use contactless payment options



Protect each other  
2 metre distance

in a safe place outside their house (e.g. under a door mat or a plant pot). When you return with the shopping you can leave it on the doorstep, ring the bell to notify your neighbour the shopping is there then move away.

Wash your hands before and after each delivery. It is also recommended that the person receiving the shopping wash their hands after bringing the shopping into the house and also after packing it away.

If you are part of an organised group delivering shopping and you are not known to the person you are delivering shopping to, consider use of a 'safe word' agreed with the person in advance, that you can use to provide reassurance if required. Double check you are leaving food at the correct house.

### Health and Safety of Volunteers

Think about what the risks may be when you are volunteering. You have the responsibility to ensure that you know what the risks are when you are volunteering, and to take appropriate measures to avoid these. Do not knowingly put yourself at risk of harm in the course of your informal volunteering or others.

Volunteers should:

- Avoid any direct face to face social contact with older people or vulnerable people you are supporting who are self-isolating due to Covid-19. DO NOT ENTER THEIR HOMES.
- Discuss with the person you are supporting the best way to exchange money and shopping lists to avoid human contact
- 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

Important safety information

#SupportBarnet

## Volunteer Sickness

Volunteers with COVID-19 symptoms of a high temperature and new continuous cough 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 though please remember the Government is currently encouraging everyone to do social distancing. 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.

## Confidentiality and personal data

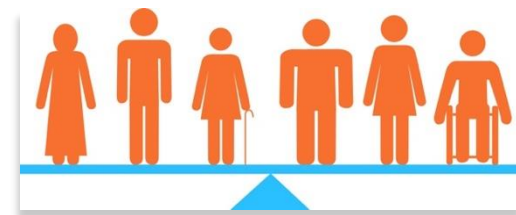
Volunteers will probably find that Facebook, WhatsApp or Freegle is being used between local communities to communicate offers of support. This communication channel is then linking neighbours who need support. Please remember when communicating on social platforms not to publicly state home addresses and vulnerability. To do this, message people privately to limit the risk of older or vulnerable people being taken advantage of. Please also remember not all older people use social media platforms so perhaps leafleting as way of asking if they need support would be beneficial. It's really important that requests are kept safe and confidential, both for legal reasons around data management and to also safeguard the most vulnerable. If you do make forms and spreadsheets, make sure that they're protected by a password and that only a small number of trusted people in your group have access to them.



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. Do not disclose any personal data to others without an individual's consent. This is a breach of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018, which has strict rules in this area.

## Equal Opportunities

Volunteers and individuals receiving support should 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. Please treat everyone equally and with respect.



## Safeguarding - Clients' personal safety

020 8364 8400  
info@communitybarnet.org.uk  
www.communitybarnet.org.uk  
<https://www.facebook.com/CommUNITYBarnet/>  
<https://twitter.com/CommUNITYBarnet>

## **What is 'Safeguarding'?**

Safeguarding is the function of protecting adults from abuse or neglect. 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. Safeguarding is the need to protect certain people who may be in vulnerable circumstances. All vulnerable adults have the right to be safe, happy and healthy and deserve protection from abuse. Go to our website and watch the video on safeguarding

## **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. Types of abuse are physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, financial, etc. In the current situation financial abuse is particularly relevant to vulnerable adults and may include theft, fraud or exploitation.

Volunteers have responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of the vulnerable adults they support. By talking to people you are supporting over the phone you may get to know them and they may say something that raises a concern of potential abuse.

## **Reporting Potential Abuse**

We appreciate as there will be minimal face to face contact with older and vulnerable people so this may be difficult to highlight. However, sometimes during telephone conversations when you may get to know individuals you are supporting more this may become more evident. 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. If you think a vulnerable adult is in immediate danger or a crime has been committed then you must inform the person of concern that for their safety you will raise the safeguarding issue. In an emergency 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:

If you think it,

## Safeguarding

### Local Adult and Child Safeguarding Contacts (updated 23/03/2020)

If you are concerned about an adult who may be at risk of abuse, harm or neglect you can make a referral or contact Social Care Direct on **020 8359 5000 (Monday to Friday, 9am - 5pm)**  
Opening Hours: Mon – Thurs: 9am – 5pm; Friday 9am – 4.30pm

If you believe a child is at risk of immediate harm call the Police on **999**

If you feel you have urgent welfare concerns about children or young people that require an immediate response, phone the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) **020 8359 4066**. Monday to Thursday 9 am to 5.15 pm and Friday 9 am to 5 pm.

Outside of these hours you should report any concerns that need an immediate response to our emergency duty team on **020 8359 2000**.

If you are worried that a child may be suffering, or may be at risk of harm, you should complete a safeguarding concern referral.

You can also watch the safeguarding video on our website/[www.communitybarnet.co.org.uk](http://www.communitybarnet.co.org.uk)

Find out more about MASH <https://bit.ly/2CBMash>

For emergencies **outside normal office hours**, please contact the Emergency Duty Team **020 8359 2000**

## Fraud/Theft

A concern of older people or vulnerable people is the risk of fraud or being taken advantage of by dishonest people. This is in extreme, but very rare, cases as teams of volunteers are usually caring, friendly and have true empathy for helping those in need.

However if fraud is reported then this is a criminal offence There will be Fraud awareness made to individuals receiving support to report concerns of fraud, theft, etc. Individuals receiving support will be encouraged to cross-reference shopping with receipts and change to ensure goods have been received appropriately.

## **Connecting with other volunteers:**

To help prevent the spread of Corona Virus, using social media platforms is a great way to communicate and stay connected. However if you wanted to do video chats with a group of volunteers so you feel part of your neighbourhood and community it would be useful to use Zoom via your smart phone or computer. For more information visit: <https://zoom.us/>

## **Understanding COVID-19 and the Coronavirus**

To understand COVID-19 and the medical symptoms and what you need to know can be found

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