

Safe Voluntary Action - COVID-19 Guidance

The response of local communities and voluntary and community sector organisations to the Covid-19 crisis has been phenomenal. New services and initiatives responding to local need have been set up by both organisations and individuals ranging from collecting prescriptions, shopping, provision of hot meals, advice and friendly chats over the phone, food bank services, dog walking, horse feeding, online classes etc for those affected by self-isolation or shielding,

A lot of individuals are supporting their local communities in this time of need and this guidance will help you as an organisation or initiator to keep your volunteers and service users safe...

Information you need to collect on volunteers:

- name
- any medical issues relevant to the role
- over 18?

If you are involving volunteers under 18 you need a child protection policy plus a DBS check for your role. You would also need a dedicated activity risk assessment for volunteers under 18. Our current advice would be to involve family groups rather than individual volunteers under 18.

- Under 70?

Volunteers over 70 are in the at risk category and should only carry out home based roles for example making phone calls/befriending.

- contact details
- a reference
- DBS

DBS checks are needed for all volunteers who deal with a person's finances or shopping so we discourage organisations to have volunteers take money. This will also keep service users safe if scammers should try to ask for money. In addition we have all been encouraged not to handle bank notes so this will keep volunteers safer too!

However, the Disclosure and Barring Service has issued guidance saying that volunteers do not need a DBS check for community volunteering but should keep records of money spent and receipts. You should however have safeguarding measures in place and need to ask your volunteers if they are on any barred list.

- driving licence/insurance

Any volunteers who use their car to deliver food parcels or shopping needs to have a valid driving licence and car insurance that covers their volunteering. In most cases this can be obtained free of charge from their insurance by making a simple phone call. Do make sure to ask to see this, because otherwise their insurance may not cover them if they have an accident while out delivering!



Information you need to give your volunteers:

- named co-ordinator and contact details
- clear role description
This is important so volunteers feel safe in what they can and cannot do, it will also help to protect vulnerable clients and give clear boundaries to the volunteers.
- COVID -19 Safe Volunteering Guidelines
Sample guidelines can be obtained through Teignbridge CVS.

A note on Safeguarding

Anybody self-isolating can be classed as a vulnerable adult so we suggest that you have a policy statement and procedures reflecting this. Having a clear role description and procedures around shopping that do not involve handling money can be part of this. Please do also make sure that there is a named contact to report any safeguarding concerns to and that they know how to act upon any issues. You may also want to consider issuing a badge to your volunteers.

Safe ways to offer use volunteers to offer shopping are:

- 1) use a shop where the client can place the order and pay over the phone and volunteers just collect and drop off
- 2) volunteers pay for the shopping and put in an expense claim to the organisation straight away for reimbursement. The organisation will then invoice the client .

A note on GDPR

Please keep volunteers and service users personal details safe. Use a lockable filing cabinet or password protected computer. Make sure you do not hold excessive data – for example it is sufficient to have a form saying that you have seen somebody's driving licence and insurance certificate – you do not need to copy them.

Please do also make sure that volunteers understand the need for confidentiality and data protection and what this may look like in practice.

Please Contact Teignbridge CVS for templates or good practice examples of volunteer role descriptions, COVID-19 Safe Volunteering Guidelines, Safeguarding Statements or with any other volunteer related queries you may have. anja@teigncvs.org.uk 01626 326120

