

Guidelines for involving volunteers in the response to Covid-19

A Senior Responsible Officer should:

- Be designated to lead the volunteering effort
- Have a sound understanding of the nature of the crisis and what may be required
- Be integrated with the wider crisis response system, as necessary
- Monitor government guidance which may affect the work of volunteers e.g. on social distancing, restricted movement, and shielded communities

The Senior Responsible Officer should ensure that:

- Sufficient volunteer supervisors are available and aware of their responsibilities
- Staff and volunteers are aware of, and adhere to, relevant government guidelines which may affect their work e.g. on social distancing, restricted movement, and shielded communities
- Operational priorities and a Code of Conduct are shared by all staff and volunteers
- There is guidance on when to reject volunteers if they: show signs of being unhealthy; are under the influence of drugs/alcohol; do not follow instruction for safe working; are unable to fit into any of the needed tasks; have issues with the DBS check; live with someone who has the virus or is vulnerable to it
- Health and Safety policy is applied to create a safe and hygienic working environment for staff and volunteers
- Volunteers who are tasked by the Local Authority are covered by its insurance
- Proportionate and scalable processes are used to involve volunteers, including processes:
 - 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 where required
 - To assess the risk to staff, volunteers, and vulnerable people from the tasks that volunteers deliver and identify risk reduction measures
 - To monitor changes in risk from the changing situation
 - 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
 - To track the delivery of activities by volunteers
 - To evaluate the experience of vulnerable people from the activities of volunteers
 - To evaluate the experience of volunteers
 - 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
 - To identify strains on the system as volunteer numbers increase and decrease
 - To communicate with volunteers including the contributions they have made to supporting vulnerable people
 - Maintain appropriate records and report on performance e.g. of number of vulnerable people, volunteers, tasks delivered, hours worked, feedback
 - That align with Cabinet Office guidelines on [involving volunteers in emergencies](#)
- Coordinate with other volunteering initiatives, including:

- With NHS Emergency Volunteers, national volunteering groups, community groups
- Requests for support from NHS Emergency Volunteer scheme being coordinated through a Designated Senior Officer using the [NHS Volunteer Responders portal](#) following their [instructions](#)
- Requests for support from Red Cross volunteers and Red Cross Community Reserve Volunteers by liaising with BRC liaison
- Monitor and map good neighbour activities (e.g. [Covid Mutual Aid](#)), but only engage if they pose an unacceptable risk
- Ensure volunteers:
 - Agree to the Code of Conduct
 - Are aware that they may be personally liable if they do not follow the training/instruction given
 - Have a defined role and task to deliver which matched their capability
 - Are able to roster themselves to ensure sufficient cover
 - Are able to gain advice from a designated contact if they have difficulties
 - Are given sufficient training to conduct their task, including specific Covid-19 awareness 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
 - At the end of their volunteering, are thanked and their feedback recorded
 - Who are furloughed by their employer do not provide services to that employer through their volunteering
- There are reasonable business contingency plans in the event of a loss of:
 - Key staff e.g. involve deputies to ensure a smooth transition, how trusted volunteers can supplement staff
 - Buildings due to a need for relocation e.g. due to hygiene/infection issues
 - Loss of power, water, information technology and communications infrastructure e.g. alternative ways of working
 - Volunteers e.g. delivering tasks with a significantly reduced volunteer base
- Recognition and reward to volunteers is applied equitably and effectively

Useful resources:

- Cabinet Office guidelines on [involving volunteers in emergencies](#)
- NCVO information on [volunteers and the law](#)
- VolunteeringNow guidance on undertaking [risk assessments for volunteering](#)

For more information on this guideline, please contact: Duncan.shaw-2@manchester.ac.uk