



Volunteer guidelines

Updated 25/03/2020

You can now only leave your home to do the following:

- **shop for basic essentials – such as food and medicine**
- **one form of exercise a day – such as a run, walk or cycle, alone or with other people in your household**
- **any medical need – i.e. to visit a pharmacy or deliver essential supplies to a vulnerable person**
- **travel to and from work – but only where this is absolutely necessary**

General guidance for COVID-19:

1. The most common symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) is a new continuous cough and/or high temperature. If you have these symptoms, however mild, stay at home and do not leave your house for 7 days from when your symptoms started. You do not need to call NHS 111 to go into self-isolation. If your symptoms worsen during home isolation or are no better after 7 days, contact [NHS 111 online](#). If you have no internet access, you should call NHS 111. For a medical emergency dial 999.
2. Wash your hands more often than usual, for 20 seconds using soap and water, particularly after coughing, sneezing and blowing your nose, after being in public areas and before handling food. If you do not have access to water and soap use hand sanitiser but make sure it has an alcohol rating of at least 60%.
3. To reduce the spread of germs when you cough or sneeze, cover your mouth and nose with a tissue, or your sleeve (not your hands) if you don't have a tissue, and throw the tissue in a bin immediately. Then wash your hands or use a hand sanitising gel.
4. Clean and disinfect regularly touched objects and surfaces using your regular cleaning products to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people.

Already a volunteer:

The guidelines for volunteers are dependent on what area of volunteering you are in and what your volunteering entails, it is important to remember that the volunteering sector is broad so different rules may apply. You should contact the organisation you volunteer with to find out if they are still open and what to do next. If you are still required it is likely that your volunteer role will change, for example you may be asked to contact service users by phone rather than face-to-face, or if possible, you may be asked to work remotely. You should at all times follow the government and NHS health advice, by ensuring that you are making sensible decisions and minimising the risk to your own and others health at all times.

Volunteer guidelines:

- always follow NHS guidance on social isolation which can be found [here](#)
- contact the organisation you volunteer with to check their current COVID-19 guidance
- find out whether you can offer support remotely



- only leave your house if the support you are offering is essential e.g. shopping for essential food or collecting medicines
- if you do need to leave your house, observe social distancing (>2m away).
- wherever possible leave any deliveries e.g. food or medicine on the doorstep, if you absolutely have to go in ask the person to stay at least 2m away from you
- wash your hands before and after any activity
- if you are in a risk group for COVID-19 it is particularly important that you follow advice to self-isolate and do not leave your house
- if you are concerned about the health of anyone advise them to contact 111 online or offer to do it for them (**999 is for emergencies only**)

Dropping off food or medical supplies:

There is no evidence to suggest that COVID-19 is passed on through food or parcels. The main risk of transmission is from close contact with infected people. However, steps can be taken to minimise the risk of infection when food is changing hands. Which is why it is preferable that there is no physical contact when dropping off supplies.

Contact-free delivery:

- if collecting a food order or prescription for someone make sure you are maintaining social distancing always
- before dropping off any supplies check whether the person is self-isolating
- set up an approximate time of delivery and make sure you have the contact details of the person you are delivering to
- telephone when you are near so that the person is aware that you are coming
- there should be a set drop off point established in advance such as the door step
- knock on the door, then step back at least 2 metres and wait nearby so that you know the supplies have been received
- only enter a property if it is absolutely essential
- consideration needs to be given where a person does not answer the door as to whether the supplies will be left or held onto

Money:

The COVID-19 virus spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes, so it is important that you catch your coughs and sneezes into a tissue and dispose of this immediately. Then wash your hands thoroughly with water and soap for at least 20 seconds. These droplets can survive on surfaces such as door handles, cups, mobile phones and money for days. This is why:

- non-cash payments are being encouraged, with telephone, BACS or contactless payments being preferable, the contactless payment limit is set to rise to £45 next week
- you should wash your hands after handling cash because COVID-19 can remain on notes 'just like any other surface' for several days
- do not touch your face or eat food after handling cash without washing your hands with water and soap for 20 seconds

Cleaning

If your volunteering includes cleaning please make sure you follow the general COVID-19 guidelines, your organisations guidelines as well as those set out by the government:

- wash your hands on arrival and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- use usual household products, such as detergents and bleach
- frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly
- maintain social distancing by making sure that you are the only person in the room that you are cleaning
- do not visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care
- look after your own well-being and physical health during this time
- if someone in the household has COVID-19 try to delay cleaning until after the isolation period (7 days if living alone, 14 days if living with others)
- provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use NHS 111 online coronavirus service and leave the number for NHS 111 prominently displayed

Personal waste (used tissues, continence pads and other items soiled with bodily fluids) and disposable cleaning cloths can be stored securely within disposable rubbish bags. These bags should be placed into another bag, tied securely and kept separate from other waste within your own room. This should be put aside for at least 72 hours before being put in the usual household waste bin for disposal as normal.

Laundry

If your volunteering includes doing laundry please make sure you follow the general COVID-19 guidelines, your organisations guidelines as well as those set out by the government:

- wash your hands on arrival and often, using soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards
- do not shake dirty laundry before washing- this minimises the possibility of dispersing virus through the air
- wash items as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
- maintain social distancing whilst in the household by making sure you are in a separate room to the person you are visiting
- do not visit if you are unwell and make alternative arrangements for their care
- look after your own well-being and physical health during this time

- if someone in the household has COVID-19 try to delay visiting to do the laundry until after the isolation period (7 days if living alone, 14 days if living with others)
- provide information on who they should call if they feel unwell, how to use NHS 111 online coronavirus service and leave the number for NHS 111 prominently displayed

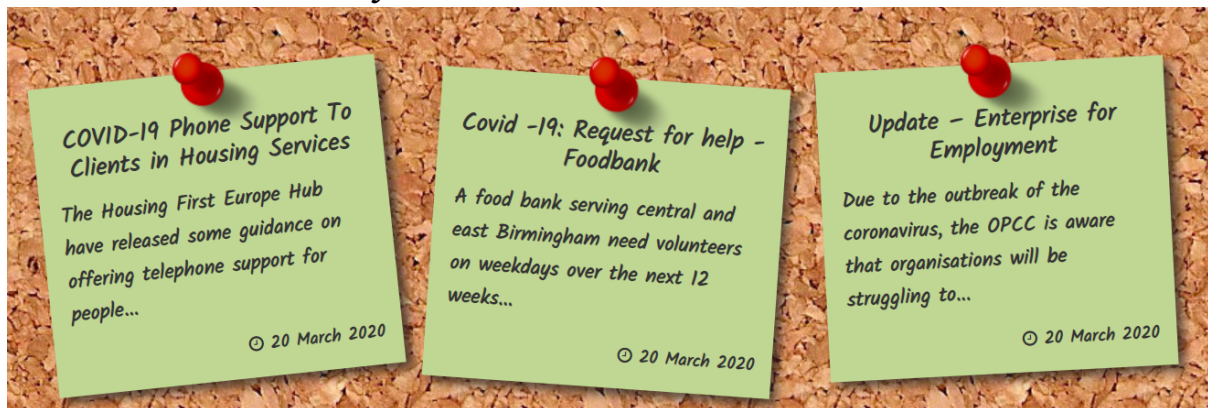
Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items. If the individual does not have a washing machine, wait a further 72 hours after the 7-day isolation period has ended; the laundry can then be taken to a public laundromat. Items heavily soiled with body fluids, for example, vomit or diarrhoea, or items that cannot be washed, should be disposed of, with the owner's consent.

Looking to volunteer:

With many volunteers being over the age of 70 and having to self-isolate as per the government guidelines there is going to be a gap in the volunteering sector.

If looking to volunteer, you should make sure you adhere to not only the general COVID-19 guidelines, but the guidelines set by the organisation you are volunteering with. Even if you are volunteering locally by helping members of your community by doing their shopping, collecting their prescriptions or walking their dog you should always maintain a 2-meter distance and follow the general COVID-19 guidelines.

BVSC- The Centre for Voluntary Action



BVSC is currently working with Birmingham City Council to create a coordinated community response to the coronavirus outbreak.

They are currently trying to gather information on what projects, initiatives and organisations are already doing and are asking for people to get in touch if:

- you are a voluntary initiative working to support local citizens in Birmingham in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak
- you have support to offer and ideas to share
- you would like to join a growing network of community groups and public sector partners working to support health and community resilience.

Get in touch:

Email: Comms@bvsc.org

Tel: 07388 376 945

Offer support: <https://www.bvsc.org/offer-local-support>