

# Volunteering Safely

## Course Companion

### Introduction

Welcome to the Volunteering Safely: Course Companion, which has been developed by **HCF Training & Development** and **#Team Herts Volunteering**, in partnership with our course trainers from **Training Together** and **Community Action Dacorum**. This course companion is intended to provide further support for attendees of the online 'Volunteering Safely' course, however it does not replace the training.

'Volunteering Safely' is an introduction to volunteering safely with vulnerable adults in response to COVID-19. This course ensures that volunteers can provide a service that is safe, both for themselves and the person who is self-isolating. We highly recommend attending the course alongside reading this course companion. The training is not a prerequisite to volunteering but is very helpful and great for ensuring volunteers understand the risks associated with volunteering and understand safeguarding, and health & safety procedures.

The course companion includes follow up information on specific volunteer roles, alongside responses to the most frequently asked questions from the training.

*Please note: This guide is not exhaustive and provides generic volunteer guidance. Individual organisations are likely to have their own additional procedures which volunteers should follow. Please always ask the organisation you are volunteering with for a copy of their volunteer policy.*

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## Background checks

### Criminal records

Checking the criminal record of someone applying for a role is known as getting a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. A DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check does not need to happen for all volunteers – only when they are taking part in certain types of activities. Of the four types covered in this guide, DBS checks are only required for volunteers transporting clients to medical appointments. This is because they may have close and unsupervised contact with clients.

### Driving documents

Any volunteer using a vehicle will need to provide online photos of:

- A full UK driving licence.
- Vehicle insurance cover, including confirmation that you made your insurance company aware that you will be volunteering using your car.
- The vehicle, with registration plate, so that your MOT and Tax can be checked online.

### Supervision

Your organisation should provide you with the name and contact number of your supervisor, who will contact you once a week by telephone/video call and can answer and specific questions you may have about your volunteer role.

### Reporting a safeguarding issue

Your supervisor will inform you of your designated safeguarding person at your voluntary organisation. Anyone in Hertfordshire can also report to Herts Safeguarding Adults Board 24/7 by calling 0300 123 4042. You can find more information here: [Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board](#)

## Safety advice for all volunteers

### Do:

- Always maintain a 2-metre distance from other people
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds on a frequent basis
- If going outside, take hand sanitiser (containing at least 60% alcohol)
- If using a vehicle, always carry with you: drinking water, hand sanitiser and a mobile phone
- Ensure that someone knows where you are going and what time you are expected to return
- If you (or anyone you have been in close contact with, in the past two weeks) has symptoms of coronavirus, stop volunteering immediately and inform your supervisor

**Do not:**

- Go inside the client's home
- Accept any offer of a 'tip' or reward
- Give medical, financial, or other advice which requires expert knowledge
- Offer to provide any other service not in your volunteer description (such as cleaning or DIY)
- Exchange social media information, or your personal address with clients

### Volunteer Role: Delivery

#### Collecting and delivering groceries / prescriptions

This involves collecting groceries, food parcels or prescriptions and delivering them to adult clients, who cannot shop for themselves and have no family or friends to do it for them. Most prescriptions are sent electronically direct to a pharmacy from the GP surgery so there is no need to hand in a paper prescription. You should only collect prescriptions if the organisation you are volunteering with and the client have asked you to.

#### Grocery delivery process:

Before you come to delivering groceries, a lot of the 'pre-work' should have been done for you by your voluntary organisation. The **voluntary organisation** or the client's assigned befriender will usually:

- Collate a shopping list for you (to a maximum value stipulated by the organisation) including alternatives (if items are unavailable) and items to avoid due to allergies
- Divide the list into items the client wants to use in the next 72 hours and items that can be left for longer
- Agree a desired date and approximate time of delivery with the client
- Provide a codeword to the client that the volunteer will use
- Provide you, as the volunteer, with the client's name, address, codeword, delivery date & approximate time of delivery
- Have already explained to the client what to do when the delivery is dropped off. For example, **the client** should:
  - Wait inside until the volunteer lets them know the delivery is on the doorstep
  - Ensure that the volunteer tells them the correct codeword
  - Take the bag(s) inside that contain items to be used or that need to be refrigerated within the next 72 hours
  - Leave the bag with items that they do not need for 72 hours on the doorstep or in a safe space

- Try not to touch their face at any point during this process
- Disinfect the items they need to use soonest with a disposable wipe and put them away
- Wash their hands for 20 seconds after handling the delivery
- If they have not already paid, they should put an envelope with cash through the letterbox for the delivery volunteer or leave it outside the door
- If the volunteer puts an envelope with change through their letterbox, they must not touch the letter for 72 hours
- Not offer a reward or tip to the volunteer because they are not allowed to accept them

As a **volunteer**, collecting & delivering groceries, you will need to:

- Follow hygiene procedures before, during and after the collection & delivery
- Place items that the client wants to use within 72 hours and items that can be left for longer in separate bags
- Take a photo of the receipt and send it to your supervisor
- Place both bags, with the receipt, on the client's doorstep and inform the client by phone or by knocking on the door that they are ready
- Step back at least 2 metres from the delivery once completed
- When the client comes to the door, tell them your name and codeword
- Watch the client take in the bags
- If the client leaves you cash payment in an envelope, do not open it for 72 hours
- If change is needed, place it in an envelope labelled "do not open for 72 hours" & put it through the client's letterbox

#### Prescription delivery process:

Before you come to delivering prescriptions, a lot of the 'pre-work' should have been done for you by your voluntary organisation. The **voluntary organisation** or the client's assigned befriender will usually:

- Provide the client with your volunteer name and organisation
- Tell the client to phone their pharmacy letting them know the name of the volunteer who will be collecting the prescription
- Agree a date and approximate time of delivery with the client
- Provide a codeword that the volunteer will use
- Provide you, as the volunteer with the client's name, address, pharmacy address, codeword, delivery date & approximate delivery time
- Have already explained to the client what to do when the delivery is dropped off. For example, **the client** should:
  - Make sure that they will be available on the allocated day to take the prescription, because the volunteer is not allowed to hand it to anyone else

- Wait inside until the volunteer lets them know the delivery is on the doorstep
- Ensure that the volunteer tells them the correct codeword
- Take the prescription inside
- Try not to touch their face at any point during this process
- Remove the outer packaging and put it in the bin
- Wash their hands for 20 seconds after handling the delivery
- If they need to pay the volunteer for the items, they should put it in an envelope containing cash through their letterbox
- Not offer a reward or tip to the volunteer because they are not allowed to accept them

As a **volunteer** collecting & delivering a prescription, you will need to:

- Follow hygiene procedures before, during and after the collection & delivery
- Collect the prescription from the pharmacy and place it outside the client's door
- Watch the client take the prescription- it is important that only the client can receive the prescription from you (use your best judgement that this is the case)
- Inform your supervisor that the prescription has been delivered

*Please Note: It is very important that you should only collect prescriptions if the organisation you are volunteering with have asked you to.*

### Volunteer role: Dog walking

This involves walking someone else's dog if they cannot do it themselves e.g. a key worker, someone who is at particular risk from the virus, or is self-isolating in a household suspected of having coronavirus.

Beforehand your supervisor from your **voluntary organisation** will confirm with you:

- The client's name
- Address & telephone number
- Codeword (they have pre-agreed with the client)
- Date & agreed time of arrival
- Information on the dog you will be walking

As the **volunteer** in this role you should ensure that you:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving home
- Take hand sanitiser, dog waste bags and your own lead with you
- Telephone the client or knock on the door to announce your arrival
- Keep at least a 2-metre distance from the door, introduce yourself and state the supplied code word

- Ask the client to tie their dog to an outside gate or fence (ensure that you always maintain your distance)
- Once the client has returned to their door at a safe distance, attach your lead and walk the dog in the area surrounding the client 's home
- Agree to an estimated duration of walk
- Do not drive anywhere to walk the dog
- if you pat the dog, sanitise your hands before touching your face
- Remember that coronavirus can survive on dog fur for several hours
- On your return tie the dog to the same gate / fence the client had on arrival.
- Inform the client by telephone or by knocking on the door that you have returned
- Keep to a 2-metre distance and wait for the client to collect the dog and return indoors before you leave
- Use Antibacterial sanitizer straight away, then as soon as you can, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds

### Volunteer role: Telephone befriending

Before you make your first phone call, your supervisor at the **voluntary organisation** should provide you with:

- The client's name & contact details
- A codeword they have pre-agreed with the client
- Any useful information on the client that they are able to provide you with

### Suggested discussion points & useful phrases to use

#### First conversation with a new client

- Hello, is that (their name)?
- Hello (their name), I am (your first name) from (Your Organisation)
- I'm calling for a friendly chat
- So that you know that I am genuine, my code word is (use codeword here)
- Are you free now and happy to talk?
- I need to make another call at (time) but I can talk until then.

#### Introductory welfare questions

- How are you feeling today?
- Have you got enough food / medicine?
- Is anyone who is living in your home going out at all?
- Is anyone visiting you?

#### If your client says they feel unwell

- Do you have a high temperature?
  - You do not need to measure your temperature if unable to, do you feel hot to touch on your chest or back?
- Do you have a new, continuous cough? Which is classed as:
  - Coughing 'a lot' for more than one hour
  - Or three or more coughing episodes within 24 hours

If your client said yes to one of these, advise them to phone their GP or care team immediately. Please note, you are not allowed to give medical advice and must ask them to consult with a professional. Speak to your supervisor if you have any concerns.

#### To end the call:

- I have another caller waiting so I will have to go now. It was very nice chatting today. Would it be okay to give you a call again next week at the same time?

#### Discussions around Coronavirus

If they indicate that someone they are living with (or who they receive visits from) could bring the coronavirus into their home, you can discuss this with them. Where it is possible you may want to advise them to:

- Frequently wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water
- Make sure that anyone who comes into their home also frequently washes their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- Clean objects and surfaces they touch often, such as door handles, kettles, and phones
- Use their regular cleaning products, which are fine to continue using
- Clean a shared bathroom each time they use it, for example by wiping the surfaces they have touched
- Stay at least 2 metres (3 steps) away from other people in their home as much as possible
- Always stay at home – do not leave your home to buy food, collect medicine or exercise
- Get food and medicine delivered and left outside their door. You are not able to do this for them; however, you can ask your supervisor to contact them with information on who can
- Ask friends and family to help them where possible or register at GOV.UK or with 'Herts Help' to get coronavirus support if they need it
- Prepare a hospital bag in case of emergency, including a list of the medicines they are taking

#### Keeping your client safe from abuse and neglect

If someone is being abused or neglected, they may find it hard to talk about. If you have any concerns:

- Avoid closed questions such as 'Did you have a nice day?'. These make it easy for your client to simply say yes or no. Your client may also say yes just to please you
- Do not sound disbelieving or disgusted
- Do not carry out a detailed investigation, this is not your responsibility

Open questions do not prompt a reluctant person to tell you very much. In your personal everyday conversations, you may notice this too, for example:

- Question: How did you get here? Common response: By car
- Question: How was your day? Common response: Fine
- Question: What is the matter? Common response: Nothing

**The following phrases may be useful to use instead:**

## Listen:

- Tell me...

## Then encourage them to continue:

- Go on... Uh huh... yes ... tell me more

## Empathise:

- That sounds really hard
- I can hear you are upset
- I am sorry that this has happened

## Reassure:

- I know this must be difficult for you. Is there anything I can say to make it easier?
- You said you were not happy this morning, do tell me about it?
- So, what you are telling me is...Have I got that right?
- So, to summarise what you are saying...

## If your client wants to tell you something confidential or asks you to keep their situation a secret:

- I would like you to tell me about it, however you need to know that I have a duty to tell my supervisor if I believe someone may come to harm.
- Their concerns may be shared with others; however, you will be involved in decisions about what will happen
- What would you like to change?

**Abusive, offensive or aggressive language**

If your client becomes abusive or aggressive, try to remember that anger often stems from frustration, fear, low mental wellbeing or medical conditions such as dementia. Do not take it personally, try to take a deep breath and say to yourself: "It's the situation, not me!" We advise you to follow the three steps below:

**1. Acknowledge the client's anger by saying:**

- I can hear you are upset

The client may be raising their voice or using bad language because they want you to know how angry they are. If you do not acknowledge their anger, they may shout louder.

**2. Take Control:**

Give specific commands because they may not realise that they are shouting e.g.

- Please lower your voice because I want to help, and I need to hear what you are saying

Tell the person how their comment makes you feel e.g.

- I know it wasn't your intent, but that made me feel uncomfortable



Use the useful phrase below, which can be remembered using the acronym **WISH**:

**W**hen I'm shouted at, **I** find it difficult to concentrate, **S**o, I'd like it to be quieter. **H**ow? Can you help me with that?

### 3. Listen

- Tell me (everything)
- Go on... Uh huh... yes ... tell me more

Do not interrupt the client

Every so often mirror the conversation & repeat back what they have told you

- So you are saying that...

**If your client continues to be abusive, offensive or aggressive:**

Start with a warning:

- Your language is unacceptable, and I will have to end this call if it continues

If remarks continue after this warning...

- I think things are a bit heated. I will end the conversation now and speak to my supervisor about how we can help you again, when you are happy to talk calmly

End the call & report it immediately to your supervisor.

## Volunteer Role: Community Transport

Community transport should only be undertaken for essential journeys, which will almost invariably be for non-routine healthcare purposes. Clients are usually socially self-isolating but have no symptoms.

The Volunteer organisation should ascertain whether the client is well enough for the appointment and whether they have any of the Covid-19 symptoms. If they do, they should cancel the booking. Infection may travel in either direction, therefore sticking to the protocols detailed in this guidance acts as protection for the passenger as well as for you the driver.

*Please note: The guidance below is generic, each organisation will have its own community transport policy. As the community transport volunteering role cannot adhere to social distancing rules, please ensure that you fully understand their guidance before volunteering.*

### General guidance

- If you arrive to collect a client and feel something is wrong, then you should not transport them. Please inform them politely your reasons why. You should then report this to your supervisor
- Ensure that the voluntary organisation has informed you on how payment will be taken for this service and their protocols around it. This may be done differently from other forms of volunteering as sometimes this service is funded.

- Passengers attending a medical appointment may request a stop for another purpose. Unless that purpose would have counted as an essential journey, for example to pick up their prescription following the appointment, this request should be politely refused
- Do not pick more than one client up at once
- Only pick up the passenger you have been instructed to
- Ensure that there is time to clean the vehicle before your next pick-up is scheduled
- You must have anti-bacterial wipes in your car and wipe down all frequently touched surfaces before & again after each pick up e.g. door handles & seat belts
- You must have hand sanitizer in your car
- Where possible exercise social distancing when transporting the passenger and sit them in the back of your car. Do not enter the health setting with the passenger but remain outside for when they return.
- If any passenger requires a carer or assistant who does not live in the same household, then such persons should travel separately and meet the passenger at the destination. If a passenger does travel with someone from within their own household, ensure that social distancing is maintained on board the vehicle (i.e. sitting 2 metres apart).

### Collecting Passengers

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds before leaving home
- Telephone the client or knock on the door to announce your arrival
- Keep at least a 2-metre distance from the door, introduce yourself and state the supplied code word (if given one)
- If the passenger lives in a collective housing unit (care home or sheltered housing) observe any rules on entry restrictions that might be in place. Put on gloves or use a tissue if you need to use a key safe to enter.
- Ask the passenger how they are feeling, do they have any of the symptoms associated with Covid-19 (a high temperature and/or a new, continuous cough). Are they self-isolating, suspected or confirmed to have Covid-19? Ask the same question in respect of anybody else present at the property.
- If you need to enter the property, do not touch anything initially, call out and announce yourself and try to keep a 2-metre distance initially between you and the passenger until you have confirmation of their health
- If the passenger is fit and well, continue as normal
- If they are presenting as symptomatic then politely withdraw and inform the passenger/family that you have some precautionary calls to make first. Contact the office and inform them
- If the passenger needs support or manual assistance to get into the vehicle, wear protective gloves
- If you need to carry anything belonging to the passenger (such as shopping, frame etc) wear protective gloves

### Keeping your vehicle clean

Keeping your vehicle as clean as possible is critical. Therefore, please clean all surfaces that passengers may encounter, both at the beginning and end of every journey. Focus on areas of the vehicle that receive the most regular contact with (particularly where that contact is with the hands) including:

- Door handles (inside and out)
- Handrails
- Head rests
- Seat grab handles
- Seat backs
- Seat belts (tongue/buckle/webbing)

When cleaning your vehicle, there are a few things to bear in mind:

- Using too much water/liquid can make interior fabrics damp, which will increase the likelihood that germs will collect and thrive. This can be overcome by being careful with the amount of water/disinfectant being used and maintaining adequate ventilation both during cleaning and vehicle operation. Adhesives can also fail with excessive cleaning. Where possible, antibacterial wipes may be a suitable solution
- Make sure wet floors and surfaces are dried before passenger's board

#### **Driving Emergency Procedure**

If you are involved in a road traffic accident or an incident which results in damage to your vehicle, loss or damage to property or injury to any people you must report it to the organisation that you are volunteering with.