

COVID-19 Opportunities for helping and how to volunteer safely

Current opportunities for volunteering

- Contact Sharon Davies on 07940988951 to volunteer to deliver in Pontesbury
- Pontesbury Coco Befrienders - local befriending support based at Pontesbury medical practice. Current home visits are suspended but we are continuing to support existing clients. There are vacancies for befrienders once these visits resume. Contact helen Tazewell Pontesbury Medical Practice for further information on Coco support 01743 790 325 h.tazewell@nhs.net
- Chatterbox need more telephone befrienders (who can work from home) to check in with vulnerable older caregivers and bereaved people who are self-isolating. 01743 245088 or email volunteersupport@omega.uk.net
- NHS England has launched a national volunteer initiative which includes a number of roles – telephoning, transport, delivery etc. Sign up and look at the different roles (some you can do at home) at www.england.nhs.uk/2020/03/your-nhs-needs-you-nhs-call-for-volunteer-army
- The British Red Cross also has a number of volunteer schemes to help communities in emergency situations
<https://www.redcross.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/volunteer-in-emergencies>

Keeping safe and well when supporting our Vulnerable communities

Under current Government advice (24th March 2020), members of the public are permitted to leave their house to provide care or help for a vulnerable person. Anyone who is out their home should observe social distancing and hygiene rules very carefully.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874742/Full_guidance_on_staying_at_home_and_away_from_others_1_.pdf

Members and volunteers who wish to deliver supplies should be in good health.

People in the following groups should not volunteer for deliveries:

1. Anyone who is over 70 years of age
2. Anyone who has an underlying health condition and has been advised to avoid social contact for 12 weeks
3. Anyone who is self-isolating

We are asking people to exercise specific care when **identifying and keeping records of those who need support** in our communities. We need to ask people to do this in a secure way that does not identify individuals to those not directly involved in support and care. We need to maintain confidentiality and not identify households or individuals who may be used to exploit or for threatening behaviour, and we have seen instances of this locally, for instances with Scams.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely>

<https://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/neighbourly-volunteering/> - watch a short video on how best to help older people in your community

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Health Protection Advice

Protecting the health of volunteers and the vulnerable in our community

- If you feel unwell or are more vulnerable to the virus, or a member of your family is unwell please stay at home. However strongly you feel about volunteering if you volunteer when you may be infected with COVID-19 you will potentially pass it on to You may still be able to play an important role but will need to do this from home.
- If you have offered to help other people, please do not place yourself in positions where you may feel unsafe, for instance helping late at night

1. Before you start

- If you wish to wear gloves your volunteer co-ordinator will do their best to provide personal protective equipment. You can wear rubber washing up gloves as an alternative, please make sure that you have disinfected these gloves outside before you go out. You can disinfect by using a household disinfectant or by washing the outsides with hand soap. **NO NOT USE** gloves made of any material other than rubber, COVID-19 can be carried on wool, cotton and other materials.
- **Alternatively**, make sure you wash your hands before you leave the house
- Try to make sure that anything you may carry with you e.g. mobile phone has been cleaned you can do this carefully with soap and water. Be particularly careful to clean the keypad, if you have one.
- Carry a hand sanitiser with you or a wet flannel and soap/disinfectant wipe with you in a bag. Disinfectant will kill the virus on surfaces.
- Carry a tissue with you when you are out.

2. While you are out and about

- You should not go inside the homes of anyone you do not live with, especially vulnerable people or people who believe they may be infected and are isolating themselves. Breaking these rules could put you at risk of infection, or risk spreading it to others.
- Try and keep direct face to face social contact with older or vulnerable people you are supporting to a minimum
- If you are picking things up for others, try to limit the amount of time you spend outside of your home by picking up essential items for them when you do your own shopping or collect their medicines during the same trip.
- You should stay 2m or six feet away from anyone you do not live with at all times. Do not share a car journey with them.
- Be hyper vigilant about what you touch. Surfaces that are touched often such as door handles can carry COVID-19 for 72 hours if they haven't been cleaned. Wash or sanitise your hands after touching these surfaces. Letter boxes will be less likely to carry virus because they are not touched regularly.
- Ideally leave deliveries on the doorstep or a safe agreed place, maybe knock on the door so the person knows the delivery has arrived
- Do not touch your face, this is any easy route for the virus to use to enter your system.
- If you happen to cough or sneeze, make sure you catch it in a tissue and then wash or sanitise your hands
- Keep up with the social distancing while you are out, keep 2 metres between you and others, unless the others are members of your family.
- Always park your vehicle in a safe place and keep it locked at all times
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear
- Wear seat belts at all times if driving to collect shopping

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- Ensure your mobile phone is charged in case of an emergency
- You have the responsibility to ensure that you follow procedures and that you do not knowingly put yourself at risk of harm in the course of your duties
- If you have any concerns about your own safety please contact your organiser.
- **If you have any concerns about an individual you are supporting/visiting please let your co-ordinator know and/or telephone Shropshire Council COVID-19 helpline on 0345 6789028 and they will be able to help you find the right organisation or professional to help you or email them on communityreassurance@shropshire.gov.uk.**
- Volunteers should not accept gifts, gratuities and bequests from people you are supporting. If the situation arises then volunteers must explain that it's their role to support people and therefore not appropriate to accept personal gifts for services provided, though the gesture is appreciated.

3. When you return from volunteering

- Make sure that you wash your hands (at least 20secs in soapy water) and your face before you do anything else.
- Celebrate that you've made someone's day a little brighter
- Clean your re-usable gloves on return, and/or dispose of disposable gloves.

Other considerations

- If you are getting involved in delivering items you should be issued with an ID card.
- If you become ill in general or have symptoms of COVID-19 please let your volunteer co-ordinator know.
- Please report any accidents you have to your volunteer co-ordinator
- If you are using your own car for deliveries it would be advisable to contact your insurance company to let them know this
- It is general volunteering policy not to give people your personal contact details or other personal information, however you may decide to do this for a known neighbour