

Manchester Covid-19 Community Volunteering Guidance Pack

Volunteer Centre Manchester
Managed by Macc

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Managed by Macc

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Introduction and welcome

Thank you and welcome

Thank you so much for offering your support during this particularly challenging time.

We have been overwhelmed by the response from local people wanting to help. To date (May 2020) almost 3,000 of you have signed up to our [Covid-19 volunteering mailing list](#), which is truly incredible!

“Whenever there is a crisis, the people of Manchester respond amazingly. We talk about the milk of human kindness, but it is more like adrenaline: it kicks in when it is needed and makes us stronger and better able to get through tough times. Thank you to all the volunteers who have come forward to help out in circumstances unlike anything we have seen before.”

Mike Wild – Chief Executive, Macc

The [Volunteer Centre Manchester](#) (VCM) is part of [Macc](#), Manchester’s local voluntary and community support organisation. The team works year-round to help Manchester residents to volunteer and to support volunteer involving organisations in a range of ways.

During the Covid-19 outbreak we are prioritising working with voluntary and community groups, helping them to access the support they need and to recruit and manage volunteers safely.

In this pack you will find guidance on how to keep yourself and others safe whilst volunteering. This guide is intended to supplement any specific guidance given by your organisation, so please always refer to their guidance first.

**Thank you for your support, kindness and your willingness to help.
We will get through this by working together.**

What is Covid-19 Community Volunteering?

The work that [Macc](#) does and the [Covid-19 Community Volunteer mailing list](#) are local to the City of Manchester.

We are working closely with local voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations and mutual aid / community response groups, as well as the local health services and the City Council to identify areas where volunteer support is needed.

Our priority is to help these organisations to have the capacity to safely recruit and manage the volunteers they need to deliver their services to the people they support. This means we will be sharing what these groups need rather than placing or matching volunteers and unfortunately, we cannot guarantee a formal volunteer role for everyone. However, everyone can [be a good neighbor](#) by checking in with the people around them and we have included on the next page ways for you to help from home and information on mutual aid/community response groups.

We will keep you up-to-date with current volunteering opportunities in organisations the City of Manchester that you can then opt-in to.

Some examples of roles are:

- Delivery driver
- Food shopping
- Gardening
- Posting mail
- Collecting prescriptions
- Telephone befriender
- Providing specialist skills or knowledge e.g. IT or digital skills, organisational skills.

Our Volunteer Centre team are working hard to support community organisations to safely recruit and manage the volunteers they need to support the communities they work with.

Many of the organisations that work with communities are small, with very few members of staff; therefore it is difficult for them to take on large numbers of volunteers quickly and safely.

Our ask of you then is to [opt in](#) to relevant opportunities we send you: we will share as many opportunities as we can for you to get involved in.

How to volunteer

If you have signed up to our [mailing list](#) you will receive regular e-mails from Volunteer Centre Manchester with local volunteer opportunities as well as other ways to support your community.

A list of all interested volunteers will be sent to the organisation looking for volunteers and they will get back to you with information and guidance to support you to undertake that volunteer work.

Many organisations request a specific number of applications to help them manage recruitment safely and avoid them becoming overwhelmed with requests to volunteer. We really appreciate your cooperation and understanding **and ask that you do not contact the organisation directly if the role is full.**

The information we send out to you may also include opportunities where organisations wish you to apply directly. We will always include instructions on how you are to apply for those roles.

We are also operating a list of volunteers who do not have access to the internet; you will receive volunteer opportunities and updates by phone or text from your VCM contact.

Please bear in mind that **we do not place volunteers**, it is up to you to opt into opportunities that you feel you are able to support with. We have provided guidance in this document to help you make decisions on what you are able to undertake safely. **We expect all individuals opting in for volunteer roles to have read this document before opting-in for roles.**

In the meantime, you may also wish to get involved with more informal groups like the mutual aid/community response groups. You can find more information about these groups [on our website](#), as well as links to help you find your local group.

There are also other volunteering/community schemes operating in Manchester which you may wish to consider such as [Manchester VIP](#) and [Acorn](#).

The Volunteer Centre Manchester has also put together a list of '[Hero from Home](#)' opportunities. These are ways you can proactively support many different good causes from home.

Keeping you and others safe while you volunteer

Keeping you and others safe as you volunteer is critical. Please only volunteer if you are safe and well to do so and follow all guidance below. Call your volunteer coordinator or your designated contact at your volunteer organisation if you are unable to volunteer or want to discuss any safety concerns.

Personal and public protection advice

Whilst volunteering it is important to keep safe and to follow Public Health England guidelines. Please do not do anything that puts you or others at risk. There will be specific public protection advice associated with each volunteering role and that organisation or group will have their own guidelines which you should also comply with. These will be explained to you when you begin volunteering.

You must also follow government guidance to all citizens. Please ensure you understand and comply with the government public health guidance (below). **You will not be able to volunteer if you cannot comply with this guidance.**

Stay at home if you or someone you live with has either:

- A high temperature
- A new, continuous cough
- You are one of the higher risk groups identified by the government

Keep up to date with the latest government guidance [here](#).

[Guidance on social distancing](#) for everyone in the England.

Whilst volunteering you should:

- Wear a face covering if you are volunteering in enclosed public spaces where social distancing is difficult. **By law you must wear a face covering** if you are entering shops, supermarkets, post offices, banks or using public transport (including stations/terminals). More guidance can be found [here](#).
- Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water at regular intervals throughout the day.

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- If running water and soap is not available then ensure you have alcohol-based hand wipes or sanitiser to kill viruses that may be on your hands.
 - Avoid touching your face and keep hands away from eyes, mouth and nose to avoid spread of any virus.
 - If you cough, use a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately. If the cough becomes persistent then you should follow government self-isolation precautions. If no tissue is available, cough into your arm.
 - Comply with physical distancing by maintaining at least 1 metre distance (2 metres if possible) between yourself and anyone else.
 - If you (or anyone in your household) feel unwell and have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and follow NHS guidance whilst avoiding any contact with people.

If you develop symptoms whilst volunteering, please inform your Volunteer Coordinator immediately and self – [isolate accordingly as outlined in PHE guidelines](#).

Please do not do anything that puts yourself or others at risk!

Safeguarding

Whilst volunteering you may come across vulnerable adults, children or adults at risk of harm and they should never experience abuse of any kind. **We want you to be alert to any signs of abuse, and urge you to always raise anything which may concern you.** Be assured you will always be supported by the organisation and not raising your concerns is worse than raising a suspicion that is incorrect. If anyone tells you of any type of abuse then remain calm, listen and reassure them that it will be taken seriously.

You can find a short information video about safeguarding [here](#)

Disclosures and reporting concerns

What is a disclosure?

- An adult or child telling you of the abuse
- A passive disclosure where your attention is drawn to the symptoms of abuse
- When something 'doesn't appear right' to you
- An allegation of abuse by someone else
- You see or witness something that concerns you

Responding to a disclosure of abuse:

- If you do become aware of abuse, make a record of the details as soon as possible, using the words of the person
- Don't ask too many questions or interview the person, ensure you have sufficient details to be able to accurately report the abuse.
- Try to limit the number of times people have to provide an account. If victims have to recall any abuse, this is a difficult process and each time can be distressing. It is better that they provide a more detailed account to professionals.
- Note any forms of corroboration e.g. other people who may have information, CCTV or other recordings.
- Don't promise confidentiality – never agree to keep secrets. You have a duty to report your concerns.

Remember:

- Keep yourself and others safe
- Report any thing you are concerned about
- Doing nothing is not an option

What to do:

If you have a safeguarding concern about someone you are working with please speak to the safeguarding lead, volunteer coordinator or a member of staff at the organisation or group you are volunteering with.

If you are unsure who to speak to or are concerned that your report has not been dealt with, please contact the service below:

Manchester Contact Centre

Telephone: 0161 234 5001 (open 24 hours a day, seven days a week)

Email: mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk

If an adult or child is in immediate danger you should ring the emergency services or contact the police on 999

For more information about safeguarding you can go to the [Manchester safeguarding Partnership website](#)

Safe practice checklist for volunteers

- ✓ Follow social distancing advice by staying at least 1 metre distance (2 metres if possible) away from other people when carrying out volunteering.
- ✓ Avoid physical contact with other people.
- ✓ Wear a face covering in enclosed public spaces where social distancing may be difficult.
- ✓ Wash your hands regularly, for at least 20 seconds.
- ✓ Be clear about your volunteering role and only do things that have been agreed and you are comfortable with. If you are not comfortable or are unable to complete a task please let the volunteer coordinator/volunteer contact at the organisation/group know as soon as possible.
- ✓ Keep yourself and others safe. If a situation doesn't feel safe then don't proceed and contact the Police if you or others are in any immediate danger
- ✓ Make sure someone knows what you are doing and your whereabouts at all times. Maintain regular telephone contact with the organisation you are volunteering with.
- ✓ Keep people's information and circumstances confidential and don't share any information with family, friends or on social media
- ✓ Do not try to deal with unexpected issues on your own, ask for help.
- ✓ Do not offer advice unless you are trained to do so. Signpost people to official government guidance or health professionals for advice.
- ✓ Make sure you know how to report safeguarding concerns and who to and pass any safeguarding, health and safety concerns immediately to your contact from the organisation / group.
- ✓ Be aware of your own physical and mental health and take time out when you need to. Try and avoid taking too much on.
- ✓ Don't accept gifts from people you are supporting

If you are visiting homes as part of your role:

- ✓ You must only visit homes to provide essential supplies or information if you have no symptoms and are from a household where no-one is self-isolating
- ✓ You should not enter a house unless you are part of a dedicated care team (e.g. from the NHS, social care or maintenance service).
- ✓ If delivering items, please leave items on the doorstep and let the recipient know that they are ready to be picked up
- ✓ You must not do any personal care when delivering food, medication or supplies. Carry out duties only if you can adhere to the social distancing advice

You must stop volunteering if:

- ✓ You feel unwell, especially if you (or anyone in your household) have symptoms of coronavirus (fever/high temperature, cough (new and continuous), shortness of breath).
- ✓ You're asked to stop by your volunteering organisation
- ✓ It's not safe or you do not feel safe to keep volunteering

If you develop any symptoms:

Tell the volunteer coordinator or another member of staff at the organisation you are volunteering for immediately. They may ask you to inform them of anyone you have been in contact with whilst volunteering.

You can also [watch this video](#) which covers many of the main points to remember regarding staying safe as a volunteer

Your wellbeing

Volunteering should be a positive and rewarding experience. We and the organisations/groups you will be volunteering for value your time, skills and enthusiasm.

We know that 'giving', including giving your time, is one of the five ways to wellbeing but along with all the benefits it brings, volunteering can sometimes be challenging and this may put extra strain on our wellbeing if not kept in check. That is why it is so important to keep an eye on how you are feeling; you cannot help others if you are not feeling good yourself.

If you are struggling the first thing you should do is speak to your volunteer coordinator or the person who is your contact at the organisation you are volunteering with.

There may be simple adjustments that can be made which will resolve any issues which may be affecting your wellbeing. It may also be right for you to take a break from your volunteering. There is no shame in this; It is much better to take a step back, recoup and rejoin than run yourself into the ground.

We have included some links below which you may find useful, whether you're actively volunteering at the moment or not.

- [Tips for looking after your wellbeing from Manchester Mind](#)
- [Free counselling from Talk Listen Change](#)
- [Recommended mental health apps](#)
- [Mental Health Foundation: How to look after your mental health during the Coronavirus outbreak](#)
- [Greater Sport: Ways to keep moving](#)

Tips for common community roles

Here we have put together some tips and considerations for common roles organisations are requesting volunteer support for.

The volunteer organisation you volunteer with should provide you with guidance on how they expect you to carry out your volunteering, you should always refer to these first.

Volunteer driver

If you are willing to drive your own vehicle whilst volunteering you should read the information below and confirm to your volunteering organisation / group that you have the following arrangements in place:

- a) You have informed your insurance company of the fact that you will use your vehicle for volunteering.

Please note: [if insurer is signed up to ABI](#) (there are 213 who are) There is no need to contact your car insurance provider if you are a volunteer helping the fight against Coronavirus. [Read more here.](#)

- b) You confirm that the vehicle being used is roadworthy as outlined by UK law, has a valid MOT certificate where appropriate and is taxed for use on the roads.
- c) You have a valid driving license. (some organisations may have restrictions to volunteers with points on their license using their vehicle or taking driving volunteer roles)

Prescription collection

Please note that [Pharmacy2u](#) offer a free delivery service for anyone requiring prescription collection – if you have been asked to collect a prescription you may first want to make the organisation aware of this service, they may still want you to help the person to access that service.

- Arrange to call the patient beforehand to get their contact details and details of the pharmacy you will collect the medicine from.
- Medicines must be delivered on the same day of collection and never stored in your own home overnight.
- Wear a face covering if you are entering a pharmacy ([this is now law in England](#))
- If you are collecting for multiple patients, ask the pharmacy if any medicines need to be stored in the fridge as these prescriptions should be prioritised and delivered first.
- Inform the person answering the door that you have a prescription to deliver and ask them to state the name of the patient and to confirm the address.
- Make sure you do not post the medicines or leave them outside the door if there is no answer. Always return undelivered medicine to the pharmacy.
- If medicines are not available, you will be given an owing slip by the pharmacy. You must pass this on to the patient.
- We recommend that you collect and deliver from one pharmacy before attempting any additional collections

Food shopping

- You may be collecting a click & collect delivery or purchasing the items in the shop yourself.
- For click & collect you just require the name of the individual. Once you have collected their groceries, phone them to let them know you are outside their house and leave their shopping in a suitable place outside.
- If you are going to the supermarket on behalf of an individual you [must wear a face covering by law](#).
- Ask the individual for a shopping list of items they require. Suggest they write an alternative if items are not available or if they have a priority list of essential goods.
- Arrange beforehand how payments will be made. Try to avoid using cash and suggest people pay by card if possible. You should always refer to the organisation you are volunteering with for best practice on how to do this safely.
- Please stand at least 2 metres away and wait for the person to open and collect their groceries and before you drive/walk away.

Telephone befriending

- Agree in advance the frequency and length of each call
- Be clear that it is a time limited relationship
- Make sure that the other person is happy for you to store their number
- Consider hiding your number, at least for the first call, by dialling 141 before their number, however, bear in mind that some people may not answer unknown numbers. You can speak to the person organising the befriending and arrange a time in advance so the person you are calling knows to expect a call from an unknown number at a specific time.
- Do not exchange any home address details.
- Think about topics of conversation in advance.
- Make sure you know what to do if you have any concerns before you begin befriending
- Do not feel you need to offer advice, particularly outside your expertise, always signpost them to someone more qualified to help.

You can find a short information video about telephone befriending [here](#)

Equality and diversity

Equality, diversity and inclusion apply to us all, both in terms of our obligations and our individual needs. One of the Macc's core beliefs is that every individual and community has unique talents, knowledge and insights that are important.

How you should expect to be treated and treat others.

- You should treat people as you would expect to be treated; never behave towards someone in a way that is hostile, offensive or humiliating
- You should treat people as individuals; respecting their identity even when it is different to your own and being aware that what a person finds acceptable another may find offensive
- You should not make offensive or insulting remarks, or engage in 'jokes' or 'banter' about people based on their age, disability, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, trans status, or political beliefs. Where you become aware of behaviour like this you should challenge it by calmly explaining that this behaviour is unwelcome.
- You should not avoid someone simply because they are different to you. Equally, be respectful of people's choices and don't press them to share personal details about their life.
- If you're worried that you may have said or done something that made them feel uncomfortable, it's OK to ask them in a respectful manner if something you did or said upset them.
- If you are challenged about your behaviour or language you should accept feedback in a positive way.
- If you feel that the language or behaviour of others is offensive and / or it is upsetting you, then please seek advice or support from your mentor or supervisor to help you decide how you want to deal with the issue.
- While working in any situation treat people as individuals respecting their identity and dignity even when it is different to your own

Data protection and confidentiality

The organisation or group you are working for has a responsibility to ensure information is kept securely and that the public feel confident that personal/confidential information is protected.

The Voluntary, Community, Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisation you volunteer with will have a data protection and confidentiality policy which you must follow, ask your contact at the organization for a copy. Informal mutual aid / community response groups may not have a policy, but they will have some guidelines for you to follow. Ask your contact at the group about this.

We have pulled together some basic principles on Data Protection and Confidentiality, as a guide, but always follow the specific procedures of the group/organisation you are volunteering with.

- You may be given use of and access to information about individuals, for example names and addresses to deliver prescriptions to. This information is confidential and you must only share it with others who need it as part of their role. If you are unsure about when to share information you should speak with your organisation / group contact. You will only be given this information if it is required for your volunteering role.
- If you come into contact with people e.g. if transporting or calling them, you should also treat any information they tell you as confidential and only share it with those you are volunteering for where required. You should not for example share this information with your friends or family or use it for your own purposes.
- If you think someone has accessed information inappropriately or there is a risk to information, for example you have lost some personal/confidential information, such as a list of names or a prescription, you should report it to your organisation / group contact
- Confidential waste should be disposed of securely. The organisation / group you volunteer for will have information about how this is done. If you are unsure, speak to one of your colleagues or your group contact.

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- Consider where you make calls from – if you need to call someone about a sensitive issue, find somewhere private where you won't be overheard.
 - If you need to undertake video calls as part of your volunteering role, you should ensure you safeguard personal/confidential information in the same way you would with any other method of communication, for example ensuring others can't overhear or see your conversation.
 - You should protect the information you are given, including when working from home. For example storing copies of information securely and ensuring others in your household don't have access to information stored on mobile devices or computers.
 - People have certain rights over their information. If someone asks you for a copy of their information, or asks for their data to be changed or deleted, you should consult your organisation / group contact.

Complaints, compliments and comments

Covid-19 volunteering is different to the service that we are usually able to offer as we are not currently able to work with individuals to support them to find volunteering roles and the offer of support we have had is higher than the request for support and so it is likely that not everyone will have the chance to volunteer. We will do our best to keep you informed of the situation and of any opportunities that you may be able to get involved in.

If you have any complaints, compliments or comments about the service you have received from the volunteer centre to help you find a volunteer placement please let us know.

You can do this informally by contacting a member of the Volunteer Centre Manchester team on 0161 830 4770. If you feel your concern has not been addressed, you can put your complaint in writing to:

Martin Preston Deputy Chief Executive: martin@macc.org.uk.

If you have no access to email phone 0161 834 9823 and leave a message for Martin.

You can find a full copy of Macc's Complaints, compliments and comments policy [on our website](#), or we can send you a copy in the post.

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