

Coronavirus community response

A guide for volunteers in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse



Listening Learning Leading



Introduction

Thank you so much for everything you're doing for our communities – it can't be stressed enough that the work you're doing is helping to protect and support our most vulnerable and isolated residents at a time when they need it the most.

To help keep our volunteers and those they are supporting safe and well while volunteering, we've produced this guide of important information and advice. We hope you find it useful and will continue to build on it as the pandemic continues and the advice changes.

We've included as much information as we can, but it might not cover every situation, so if there's anything you are not sure about please don't hesitate to get in touch with us – just email communitysupport@southandale.gov.uk or call 01235 422600.

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Section 1 – How we're working with volunteers

Connecting people

We're working closely with community groups to put volunteers like yourselves in touch with the people who need you.

We're asking anybody who needs help to follow the three steps in the diagram on the next page.

We have a database of the volunteer groups working across our districts. When somebody calls or emails us, our first action is to check to see if there's a volunteer group that's nearby that could help them. If you're not sure you're on our database, email us at communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk.

This means we might get in touch with you if someone living near you needs help. If you're able and willing to help, then we'll pass on the details and if you can't we'll try and approach someone else. Depending on the urgency or if we've had no luck finding a volunteer we'll provide the help ourselves.

Supporting you

We want to make sure you're able to help people to the best of your ability.

Please let us know if you're experiencing any difficulties while you carry out your life saving work, including if you're struggling to deal with all of the requests for help that are coming through. We might be able to divert some of the requests to other nearby volunteers, or put you in touch with other groups that could help.

If you have any other questions or concerns, please do get in touch and we'll do what we can to provide advice, guidance, reassurance or direct support. If you have any questions or concerns about funding, whether in the short-term or the long-term, get in touch with us and we'll try and point you in the right direction.

Email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk or call 01235 422600.



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DO YOU NEED HELP BECAUSE OF THE CORONAVIRUS?

Here's what you should do

FIRSTLY - IT'S OKAY TO ASK FOR HELP

There are lots of reasons people need help right now. Some people can't get to the shops for their groceries or to the pharmacy to pick up their prescription.

Some people need help walking their dog or just want somebody to talk to.

It's okay to ask for help. There are lots of people out there ready and willing to help. We're here to help too.



STEP 1

Speak to your friends and family. They might not know you need help and will be keen to do whatever they can.

If you don't have anyone nearby, speak to a neighbour you can trust - please only do this safely while following the guidelines on social distancing.

STEP 2

If you have no family nearby or neighbours you can turn to, check to see if there are any local volunteer groups helping out in your area, or get in touch with any charities you are already involved in as they could help.



STEP 3

If you've tried Step 1 and Step 2 and you still need help, please get in touch with us. We can put you in touch with a community group or help you directly.

Call 01235 422600

Email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk

We're here to help.

Section 2 – Top tips

Some of these tips are covered in more detail later in this guide, but are important to repeat.

Do

- Be friendly, patient and understanding.
- Explain that any precautions you're taking are to protect them as well as you.
- Only carry out requests you feel comfortable with and are able to.
- Deliver perishable items promptly. This includes medication that needs to be refrigerated.
- Only pass on contact details, names and addresses to other people if it's absolutely necessary to fulfill the request for help.
- Explain clearly what you will try to do for them, who will get their information and that they can choose to cancel their request for help at any time and for any reason.
- Be clear about how you will sort out any payments and make sure they understand before you provide any help.
- Point people in the direction of professional advice if necessary.
- Look after your own physical and mental health before others. If you ever feel overwhelmed get in touch with your volunteer colleagues or contact us.

Things to avoid

- **Going into anybody's house.** Most of the help residents need can be provided from the doorstep or over the phone. Where it's unavoidable, ask the resident to make sure you both stay at least two metres apart at all times for their protection, be as quick as you can and avoid touching surfaces in their home as this risks spreading the virus.
- **Preparing food for others** if you don't have a food hygiene qualification.

Never...

- **...take somebody else's bank card** to make payments or to get cash.

- ...**provide medical advice** if you're not qualified to do so.
- ...**offer childcare** if you're not legally set up to provide these services.

Section 3 – Safety and security

Legal security checks - DBS

There is a national government scheme called the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, which is often a requirement for people who work with certain members of the public.

There is no legal requirement for you to have a DBS check to carry out the types of volunteer work covered in this guidance. However, take simple, practical precautions like keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts.

Keep a check on your own health

While getting help to those who need it is incredibly important, it's just as important we all make sure we're not accidentally spreading the virus ourselves.

If you or anyone you live with have had any of the following symptoms in the last 14 days, please do not carry out any volunteer work that involves seeing people outside your household:

- a high temperature
- a new continuous cough.

If you have had any of these symptoms in the past 14 days, follow government guidance on self-isolating at [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) and do not continue with any work that requires you to leave the house or brings you into contact with others.

How to keep yourself and others well

You have an important role in helping support vulnerable people, so it's important you stay safe and well. It's also important to help prevent spreading the virus, so please follow the guidance below.

We're still learning about the coronavirus so information on how you can help to stop it from spreading can change. Keep an eye on [gov.uk/coronavirus](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) for the latest information and for more details on the points below.

How to prevent spreading the virus:

- Wash your hands frequently, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water at regular intervals throughout the day.
- If running water and soap are not available, use alcohol-based hand wipes or sanitiser.
- Avoid touching your face and keep your hands away from your eyes, mouth and nose.
- 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. If a cough becomes persistent then you should follow government self-isolation precautions. If you don't have a tissue available, cough into your arm.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get back home.
- Be aware that the virus can survive on hard surfaces and objects, such as tabletops and doorbells for up to five days – so it's particularly important that you wash your hands after touching them.
- Remember to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects, such as door handles, your mobile phone, and kitchen surfaces, with regular cleaning products, disposable cloths or paper rolls with a chlorine-based disinfectant or sanitiser.
- Keep at least two metres (three long strides) away from people as much as possible.

- Avoid contact with people who have a new, continuous cough or high temperature.
- If you're displaying symptoms, look up the NHS 111 website 111.nhs.uk/covid-19/ and only call 111 if you can't get online.

Keeping yourself safe when out and about

It's unlikely you will come across a situation that would put you at any risk, but whenever you're working out and about in public while you're on your own, there are some simple steps you should take as a precaution for your own safety.

- Tell a friend or family member where you are going and what time you will be back.
- Always be aware of the possibility that somebody might not be who they say they are.
- Make sure you have a fully charged phone when you leave the house and stay in plain sight and out in the open.
- Report any incidents to the police by dialing 111. If you're in immediate danger, call 999. Please also let us know about any issues you have so we can alert other volunteers.

Safeguarding advice

When providing help for people, it's possible you might come across evidence that somebody isn't being looked after carefully or possibly even a victim of abuse. If you see anything that causes you concern or you think shows somebody is being mistreated in some way, you must report it. It's okay to ask somebody if they're okay or need any help, but not to intervene if it could put you or the other person at risk.

There's more information on the kind of thing you can look out for here:

- <https://www.osab.co.uk/public/what-is-abuse-and-neglect/>

If come across anybody that needs help with basic personal care such as washing, making food, please contact Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Healthcare team on 0345 050 7666 (8.30am - 5pm Monday – Thursday, 8.30am - 4pm Friday). Out of hours emergency number is 0800 833 408 (freephone).

If you witness anything to suggest somebody is in immediate danger, call 999. If you think you see something that suggests somebody has been mistreated in the past or is being mistreated on an ongoing basis, contact Oxfordshire County Council's Social and Healthcare team on the numbers above.

There's more information about reporting a concern here:

- <https://www.oscb.org.uk/concerned-about-a-child/>
- <https://www.osab.co.uk/public/reporting-concerns/>

Protecting other people's personal information

During your volunteering, you may come across personal and sensitive information about individuals, for instance their full name, address and medical information. To make sure that all information remains confidential, and in line with the Data Protection laws here is some guidance to follow.

- Keep any data secure and treat other people's information in the same way you would want yours to be treated.
- Properly destroy any notes you've made of this information when you have fulfilled requests for help

DON'T

- Discuss any information or data with anyone who doesn't need to know it.
- Leave any messages on answerphones containing personal information if you are not 100% sure who is going to hear them.
- Distribute documents with lists of names, addresses and contact information with anyone that doesn't need it.

If you want to withhold your own phone number when making calls, dial 141 before the number you're calling. That way your own number will not be displayed to the person you are dialing.

Section 4 – ‘How to’ guides

Prescriptions

1. Call the person to introduce yourself and to let them know that you will be collecting their prescription.
2. Ask the person which GP surgery or pharmacy you need to go to.
3. Ask if they have to pay for their prescriptions. If so, go to the **Payments** section below.
4. Ask them for their full name, address and date of birth in order to collect their prescription.
5. Tell them what time you're aiming to collect and drop off the prescription to their house.
6. Let them know that you will only be able to drop off the prescription at the doorstep and check they are ok to pick it up. If they are unable to come to the door, agree a way for you to leave it somewhere they can get it - e.g. through an open window. You should avoid going into the person's home where possible, but if it is unavoidable, you should carefully follow the instructions in the **How to keep yourself and others well** section above.

Collecting prescriptions

- Always remember to protect the person's privacy and personal information. Do not share their information with anybody.
- Do not open the prescription bag, if the medication spills or breaks, please return it to the pharmacy.

Delivering prescriptions

- Unless you've agreed another process, place the prescription items in the agreed location by their door, knock, and move *at least* two metres

away, preferably more. Make sure they successfully collect the items. Bear in mind that elderly or disabled people might take longer to get to the door.

- If you're able to talk, do check to make sure they're okay and if there is anything else they need help with, but manage their expectations about what kind of thing you can help with and do not agree to helping them with anything that would unnecessarily risk spreading the virus, like coming into their home to help with something.
- Some medication may need to be stored in the fridge, you will be told this on collection, please explain this to the person you are collecting for.
- Pass on any additional information provided by the pharmacy. Do not advise on doses, preparation or administration of medication – if you're asked, recommend they call their GP or pharmacy for more information.
- Do not administer any medication.
- Make sure you receive payment and include any receipts in with the medication.
- Remind them to wash their hands after handling packaging and remember to do the same yourself.
- If you cannot deliver the prescription because no one has answered the door and it cannot be posted through the letterbox, take it back to the pharmacy you collected it from.

Shopping for someone

Before you go shopping

- Call the individual to confirm what they need and make a list.
- Let them know that you will try and get all the items, but some may not be available.
- Ask if there are any brands they prefer but explain that you might not be able to get their preference.

- Ask if they have any allergies – ask them to tell you what products and brands to avoid, particularly if you have to make any substitutions if their preferred item isn't available.
- Ask how they will be paying. Make sure you read through the **Payments** section below.
- Tell them that you will only be able to drop off the shopping at their doorstep and check they are able to come to the door to collect it. If they are unable to come to the door, agree a way for you to leave it somewhere they can get it. You should avoid going into the person's home where possible, but if it is unavoidable, you should carefully follow the instructions in the **How to keep yourself and others well** section above.

Delivering shopping

- Unless you've agreed another process, place the shopping in the agreed location by their door, knock, and move *at least* two metres away, preferably more. Make sure they successfully collect the shopping. Bear in mind that elderly or disabled people might take longer to get to the door.
- If you're able to talk, do check to make sure they're okay and if there is anything else they need help with.
- Make sure the receipt is in one of the bags of shopping.

Remind the person receiving the goods to wash their hands after handling the packaging and remember to do the same yourself.

Making Payments

Please read and understand the following before you agree to pay for something on somebody else's behalf. We've explained two options below – where possible please use Option 1 as this is the safest method and helps to stop the spread of the virus.

Option 1 – the person you are helping pays with their own credit or debit card over the phone

You'll need to understand this and explain the process to the person you're helping.

- When you speak to the person that you're doing the shopping for, agree a code word between the pair of you.
- Once you've popped the items in your basket or trolley, take it to the customer service desk rather than the checkout. Tell the customer service person the code word you've agreed with the customer and provide them with their phone number. They should then ring the customer to confirm they are happy to pay over the phone using their debit or credit card details.
- The customer service staff will then tell the individual the amount the shopping comes to and will ask them for the code word – this confirms they're not paying for somebody else's shopping.
- To complete the payment, they will then ask them to provide their card number, expiry date and card security number.
- Don't forget to pick up the receipt and put into one of the shopping bags.

Option 2 – payment by cash

- If the only option is for the person you are helping is to pay by cash, then you can either:
 - a) tell them you will pay for the items and bring them the receipt so they can pay you back, just check they're sure they'll have enough cash to pay you back; **or**
 - b) tell them that you will pick up the money from them first before you go shopping for them.

Either way, make sure you use the safe distance guidelines – ask them to place the money somewhere outside and then move away at least 2 metres to allow you to pick it up. They shouldn't leave the money out in the open before you're there to collect it.

Option 3 – online e-gift cards

Some shops offer online e-gift cards. The person can buy an e-gift card online and print it off or email you the details ready for you to present it at the checkout in store.

Driving someone to a medical appointment

Before you collect them

- Call them to agree a time that you'll collect them. Check with them where their appointment is.
- Check the person has called the surgery or hospital department and check the appointment is still going ahead and that it's okay for them to come in.

Collecting them

- Make sure you follow all of the advice in the How to keep yourself and others well section above.
- Clean anything the patient is likely to come into contact with, like car door handles and seatbelts, to help prevent them from catching the virus.
- When you arrive at their address, give them a call to say you are outside. Some elderly or disabled patients might need help getting into the car – if you have to do this, wear gloves if you have them and make sure you wash your hands at the earliest available opportunity, use hand sanitiser and avoid touching your face.
- Ask the patient to sit in the back of your car on the passenger side.
- When you drop them at the surgery or hospital, explain that you will wait outside – do not go inside unless the patient needs direct help

getting in. If they have a mobile phone, give them your mobile number in case they need to contact you after going in.

- On arrival, if there are any car parking charges, have a chat with the person to see if they are happy to pay for the parking. If not, drop them off nearby and ask them to call you when their appointment is over so you can pick them back up again.

SECTION 5 – MORE INFORMATION

- **More advice for volunteers from NCVO –**
<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus>
- **The government's coronavirus guidelines –**
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- **The NHS's coronavirus advice –**
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

SECTION 6 – CONTACT INFORMATION

Contact us

The contact details are the same for voluntary groups and for members of the public needing help:

- Email communitysupport@southandvale.gov.uk
- Call 01235 422600