



COVID-19 Best practice resources: Volunteers

The following is based on government guidance to working and volunteering safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

1. Who can volunteer?

During the corona pandemic the government say people can volunteer if:

- They are well
- nobody in their household has coronavirus symptoms, for example a cough or high temperature
- They are under 70
- They are not pregnant
- they do not have any [long-term health conditions that make you vulnerable to coronavirus](#)

2. Who should not be volunteering?

People vulnerable to the coronavirus, and who have been recommended to self-isolate include those:

- aged 70 or older (regardless of medical conditions)
- under 70 with an underlying health condition listed below
 - chronic (long-term) mild to moderate respiratory diseases, such as [asthma](#), [chronic obstructive pulmonary disease \(COPD\)](#), emphysema or [bronchitis](#)
 - chronic heart disease, such as [heart failure](#)
 - [chronic kidney disease](#)
 - chronic liver disease, such as [hepatitis](#)



- chronic neurological conditions, such as [Parkinson's disease](#), [motor neurone disease](#), [multiple sclerosis \(MS\)](#), a learning disability or cerebral palsy
- [diabetes](#)
- a weakened immune system as the result of conditions such as [HIV and AIDS](#), or medicines such as [steroid tablets](#)
- being seriously overweight (a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or above)
- those who are pregnant

It is recommended to ask volunteers to be aware of their health and if they should present any symptoms they should not volunteer and should isolate for 14 days. These symptoms include

- Cough that is dry and/or persistent
- Temperature

3. Volunteer agreement

It is recommended that there is a volunteer agreement between your project and any volunteers. It is not a legal requirement but it helps establish boundaries and expectations for both you and the volunteer(s). It is not a contract, just an agreement.

It could explain:

- the level of supervision and support for volunteers
- Any training
- whether volunteers are covered under the organisation's employer or public liability insurance
- health and safety issues, especially changes for the coronavirus
- any [expenses](#) that are covered.

4. Insurance



Make sure you check with your insurers that you are covered for volunteers and if there is an age limit. For profit-making organisations cannot have volunteers under 14.

5. Working with volunteers on your land or project during the coronavirus

Here is some best practice suggestions on how to host volunteers at your project during the pandemic. This includes suggestions on:

- Volunteer coordinator
- Safety briefing
- Signage
- Movement
- Maximum numbers of people
- Equipment
- Breaks

6. Volunteer coordinator

Depending on the number of volunteers, you could consider having a designated volunteer coordinator for each volunteering shift. This role could be responsible for briefing volunteers at the beginning of shift, checking there are adequate hand washing facilities and that they are clean, be the point of contact for volunteers during shift, ensure there are gloves for working, ensure communal areas (break room, toilets etc) are clean at beginning and end of shift and ensure tools are cleaned after shifts. In short, the coordinator can help ensure your project is keeping volunteers safe during the coronavirus. This role could be one persons' responsibility or change between staff.

7. Safety briefing

It is advisable to brief volunteers at the beginning of each shift

This could include

- Who is volunteer coordinator or responsible for volunteers that day
- Your organization's corona health and safety guidelines
- Two-metre demonstration
- Location of toilets and handwashing
- Tool use and cleaning them after



- Change of tasks in light of corona
- Any location that is off limits for volunteers
- Where to have breaks

8. Signage

The introduction or improvement of signage could help keep volunteers safe at your project.

- Location of handwashing/sanitizer stations
- Handwashing information
- Number of people allowed in here (if enclosed space)
- Tool washing equipment
- Movement signs

9. Movement

Consider changing peoples movement in enclosed or small spaces to minimise crossing or coming closer than two metres. For example in polytunnels people could always enter from the North and exit from the South to minimise crossing

10. Maximum number of people

If you have enclosed or small spaces it is worth considering how many can be in these spaces and stay at a safe distance. Clear signage at the entrance of spaces will be helpful for all.

11. Sharing equipment

It is inevitable you will have to share some equipment and tools between people. It is advisable to have cleaning facilities for tools at the end of shifts, gloves available for use of tools or equipment and handwashing available.

12. Breaks

To keep safe volunteers could bring their own cup or mug for drinking, cutlery for eating and spend breaks outside or at a safe distance inside.

13. Resources



[Government advice on volunteering](#)

[Wales Coronavirus information pages](#)

[Northern Ireland Coronavirus information pages](#)

[Scotland Coronavirus information pages](#)

Updated on 17th May 2020

On the above date the advice is applicable to the whole of the UK