

**WORKING TOGETHER IN ARGYLL & BUTE
LOOKING AFTER PEOPLE AFFECTED BY
CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)
COMMUNITY SUPPORT
GUIDE**

VERSION 25 MARCH 2020

This short guide is aimed at supporting community groups/organisations and local people who are volunteering to support the vulnerable and elderly in the community during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.



**SPREAD YOUR KINDNESS,
NOT THE VIRUS**



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**WHEN VOLUNTEERING,
MAKE YOUR KINDNESS:**

1 CLEAN

Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm soapy water before and after every contact
(Watch the NHS video on how to wash your hands properly here:
<https://youtu.be/N9hCY-MldMA>)

2 CLEAR

Be clear about what you can and can't offer.
If you are not sure, then say no.

3 CONTACTLESS

Think about your safety first and the person you are supporting. Don't touch other people, and wash hands after touching surfaces.



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A STAY UP TO DATE ON THE LATEST INFO ON THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK AND THE VIRUS

Get official information and advice at:

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/coronavirus-help-and-advice>

Only follow official advice and guidance sources. Lots of misinformation is being shared about coronavirus. This can add to confusion, increase anxiety levels for individuals, and even risk lives.

If you are managing a social media page, moderate these for inaccurate and false information, where possible. Let people know that if you cannot verify the source of the information they post, it may be deleted.

Do not share information which can't be verified as an official or trustworthy source.

B BEFORE VOLUNTEERING

Consider, are you well enough to volunteer? If you, or your household have any symptoms, or are still in the 'stay at home phase', do not volunteer for this period. For symptoms and definition of the 'stay at home phase' see <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>.

Your safety and limiting the spread of the virus is priority. Organise what you can virtually via video calls, telephone calls and facebook groups, keeping social contact to the absolute minimum to organise the community response. **Don't put yourself or others at unnecessary risk.**



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C HAND HYGIENE IS CRITICAL

Ensure you have access to hand washing facilities before and after every contact, or use hand sanitiser with 60% alcohol.

Avoid touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.

The virus can last up to 72 hours on untreated hard surfaces (like plastic and stainless steel), so regularly disinfect surfaces and door handles you come in contact with.

Always wash your hands properly before eating, and on returning to your home - before you touch anything or anyone.

For a reminder on how to wash your hands properly, watch this NHS video: <https://youtu.be/N9hCY-MldMA>

D REPEAT PRESCRIPTIONS

If delivering prescriptions, they must be left on the doorstep.

If you have their phone number, phone them and let them know you have left them on the door step. Wait a distance of 2 metres away until they have been collected.

If you don't have their phone number, knock their door and wait 2 metres away.

Wash hands or clean with sanitiser before moving on to the next contact.



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E SHOPPING

Shopping can be delivered to the doorstep, but please minimise any handling. If you can, wear disposable gloves and bin them after each visit.

Ensure shopping bags are not heavy as an elderly person may not be able to lift them in. If possible, bag in small amounts.

Wait 2 metres away to ensure shopping is collected and check that those you are shopping for are okay. Remember social distancing at all times, staying 2m away from people at all times. Wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser, before moving on to the next contact.

F WASTE DISPOSAL/RUBBISH

Personal waste (such as used tissues) and disposable cleaning cloths should be double bagged in disposable rubbish bags, tied securely and kept separate from other waste in the room. This personal waste must then be put aside for at least 72 hours before being placed in the usual external household waste bin. **Other household waste can be disposed of as normal.**

G LAUNDRY

If someone asks you to do their laundry, **no laundry can be taken to a laundrette, or shared washing machine or tumble dryer, until 3 days have passed *after* the end of their isolation period.** Don't shake dirty laundry as this can spread the virus through the air. Wash laundry using the highest temperature setting indicated on the garment care label. Where possible, wash laundry separately from other people living in your household.



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H EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL WELLBEING

Deal sensitively with anyone you know, or come into contact with, who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, as it's likely to be an anxious time for them.

With no visitors allowed (except to provide care) during periods of restriction, self-isolation can be a really lonely time, and it is normal that people will be worried for themselves and their loved ones. However, we can help each other by **staying in touch**, but from a distance – whether neighbours or friends and family who live further away.

You can make yourself available for a chat over the phone, reassuring those you are supporting that you are at the other end of the phone if they need anything, by calling, sending a text message or through social media apps.

Help may be given to set up video calls so they can connect with their friends and family remotely. (Watch and *share* this link '**Step-by-step Guide on How to Video Call Your Family**' by the BBC:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-51968122>). (All phones, tablets and laptops should be wiped down regularly with anti-bacterial solution and left for 5 minutes to allow time for the anti-bacterial to take effect).

Encourage people to **stay mentally and physically active** with activities such as cooking, reading, gardening, online learning or watching films.

Swap suggestions about how to keep busy. If people are well enough; encourage them to do some light exercise and keep active around the home, perhaps by using an online exercise class.

Throughout every step of helping, always remember that you must do everything possible to avoid spreading the virus into their home – and yours. **Remember be 'Clean, Clear and Contactless' throughout.**



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MONEY

It is understood that coronavirus can live on money for 24 hours. Consider how you can handle money safely and securely. Where possible use electronic banking for transfer of required money. **Volunteers should not take debit or credit cards from individuals, or take any PIN numbers for cards.**

If possible, wear disposable gloves whenever touching cash. Wash hands after every contact with money or, at a minimum, use hand sanitiser. Money spreads germs.

Cash to pay for shopping can be put in an envelope and posted in a box (e.g. tupperware tub). The box can be removed to a safe place and contents left untouched for 24 hours.

If you are giving change for shopping then you must inform the person you are supporting, that their change is in an envelope in their shopping bag and they must leave it untouched for 24 hours before opening, and then wash their hands thoroughly.



HEATING/POWER

Many people have pay-as-you-go meters requiring a 'charging key' to be topped up at a pay point shop. There is a risk of cross contamination here, from the householder to yourself, the shopkeeper and back. Wear disposable gloves to accept the power key. On receiving the key, clean it with 60% alcohol wipes or sanitiser. Wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser.

Before returning the key to the householder *clean the key again with 60% alcohol wipes or sanitiser*. Pop it through the letterbox with instructions to leave it untouched for 24 hours. Wash your hands, or use hand sanitiser.



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K SAFETY

If you are supporting someone you know, they will trust you. But remember some people may be anxious about having strangers help them. Do not assume that someone needs help, or call unexpectedly, especially if they live alone.

Multiple groups are emerging across Argyll and Bute on social media looking to provide support in local communities, demonstrating community spirit. However, not all of these groups will have insurance, policies, risk assessment regimes and proper governance arrangements. Therefore, people are urged to consider potential risks, to follow official guidance and put the safety and wellbeing of our more vulnerable citizens at the heart of what they do. **Safeguarding vulnerable people must be at the forefront when considering whether to accept offers of support.**

It is preferable that volunteers have a PVG.

Ideally, pair up new volunteers with existing volunteers who have PVG in place. Also consider other jobs for those without PVG, not requiring face to face contact.

On the flip side it may be worth having someone to 'buddy up' with if you are calling on people you don't know, or an area you are not familiar with.

There are many ways that we can help others in a safe way, including from our own home. For example, by checking on neighbours by phone or via social media.



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SAFETY (CONTINUED)

Be aware that not everyone out there is trustworthy and some people will take advantage of this unusual situation our society is facing. Ask vulnerable, ill or isolated people to **NOT** identify themselves via any kind of sign (such as a pillow case on the door, a sign posted in the window, or similar) - as these signs may attract people who wish to take advantage of those who are vulnerable.

AgeUK have some useful resources to help volunteers understand the basics of **safeguarding and neighbourly volunteering**. Whilst targetted at aiding older people (AgeUK is for over 50s), as the impact of wider self-isolation requirements continue, they are helpful for all and adaptable for volunteers in contact with other groups: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer/neighbourly-volunteering>.

It is best if people who need help seek this through official channels or local community support groups. You should also warn those you are helping not to let strangers into their home – and not to give strangers money under any circumstances.

Share this link to **sign up to Neighbourhood Watch Scotland alerts** to find out about scams in your area at:

<https://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk/sign-up-for-alerts/>

If you believe someone is at risk of abuse, for adults call Social Care on 01546 605517 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm), for children call Child Protection on 01546 605 517 (Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm). Out of hours, call the Social Work Emergency Line 01631 566 491 or 01631 569712 for adults or children.



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SAFETY (CONTINUED)

Privacy – Large community help groups using social media should be cautious about people asking for help publicly visible to all. Where possible, groups should try and consider ways of people being able to make requests for help more privately (via telephone, txt or direct messaging on Facebook, etc.), such as to a smaller group of coordinators who can link them up with individual volunteers. For example:

- Mrs Smith contacts the coordinators privately to say she needs some vegetables.
- The coordinators request a volunteer to get groceries for someone in central Helensburgh.
- Once a volunteer has been identified, that one volunteer is provided with the name and address of the person in need.

Due to patient confidentiality, details will not be publicly confirmed by health or other local authorities, so please do what you can to respect and protect individual privacy, and do not speculate with the local media or on social media. **Treat details you know of individuals with the utmost respect and confidentiality**, as you would expect if it was information about you.



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L LACK OF RESPONSE

If you are supporting an elderly or vulnerable person there needs to be an agreement on what to do if you arrive and there is no response. This will differ from person to person.

Give them your contact details and ask them to let you know if their circumstances change.

If they live alone then you need to have a pre-agreed plan in place.

If they have a relative somewhere else and you have their details then contact them first.

Is there a TV or radio on? You may have to look in a window or letter box to see if signs of recent activity. If they have dementia they may have gone out. Perhaps they are hard of hearing, or have mobility issues which mean they take longer than average to get to the door or window?

Having considered all of the above, decide if it is appropriate to contact the emergency services. ***This should be a last resort*** and only taken if you are sure they are inside but not responding.



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M

DATA PROTECTION (INCL. SOCIAL MEDIA)

Be very careful if you have information about a vulnerable, ill or isolated person, including their name, address, contact details and circumstances. This is personal and private information. **Restrict who has access to any logs or lists.**

Never post any private or identifiable information about an individual or identifiable photos on an open forum such as Facebook, WhatsApp or NextDoor or any other form of social media or website.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO), the regulator for **data protection and GDPR** in the UK, has formally announced that they will take a pragmatic approach to enforcement during the pandemic. They recognise that organisations are acting in the public interest and looking to protect people, so will be taking this into account. Check information on their website (<https://ico.org.uk/>) and you can call their helpline on 0303 123 1113.

Despite this, caution is still advised - only share personal data when necessary to provide a service or keep somebody healthy and/or safe. It should be risk assessed, and sensible precautions taken over how you protect information and data about people (not just vulnerable people, but everyone).



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N SOME ADDITIONAL POINTS TO REMEMBER

- People may well be lonely, and may want to you to come in and have a chat. You need to say no if you are going to protect them. You could stop and have a chat at their door as long as you are 2 metres away. You can also swap telephone numbers and let them know you are available for a chat if they are feeling anxious or lonely.
- Remember we are doing all this to keep our vulnerable population, you, and your family safe.
- If you are unsure whether something is safe, then say NO.
- If you feel unwell or have a temperature you must stay at home and self-isolate. See <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>
- Coronavirus (Covid-19) is in our communities. This means everyone in in the community should take extra precautions. **Anyone who is high risk or has symptoms should self isolate and not volunteer.** NHS Inform has up to date **information on symptoms and who the high risk groups are**, at: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>
- **What should you do if you are supporting someone in the community and they tell you they have symptoms?**
 - If their symptoms are mild then they must continue to self isolate.
 - If their symptoms become severe then they **should NOT contact their GP** (as they will be working on the frontline of treating coronavirus) **but should call NHS 24 (Tel. 111).**



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0 WHERE TO GET ADDITIONAL ADVICE

- The 'NHS Inform' website has more information about coronavirus and some very useful common questions at:
<https://www.nhsinform.scot/coronavirus>
- The UK Government website will be updated with the latest on coronavirus and advice relating to the impact on public services and accessing financial support, etc.
<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>
- Argyll and Bute TSI is working to keep up to date information and resources, for third sector organisations, on coronavirus (COVID-19) at:
<https://www.argylltsi.org/covid19.html>
If you are a third sector organisation needing support then you can contact Argyll and Bute's TSI helpline by phone on **03003 034141** or email support@argylltsi.org.uk
- Argyll and Bute Council are maintaining a webpage to help communities in responding to the coronavirus outbreak, and can be found at:
<https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/coronavirus/help-for-communities>
- A free helpline has been set up, by the Scottish Government, for people who do not have symptoms but are looking for general advice: Telephone **0800 028 2816**.
- Whilst not specific to Argyll and Bute, the following sites contain useful information on how to volunteer safely and effectively:
<https://www.readyscotland.org/coronavirus/helping-in-your-community/>
<http://www.gcvts.org.uk/blog/community-responses-to-covid-19-do-the-right-thing-safely/>



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