

Guidance for Local Authority Contact Centre Staff

Response to COVID-19

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Information for individuals wanting to volunteer

Volunteering – Could I? Should I? And how?

Health first

Anyone can volunteer but under the current guidance for responding to the coronavirus, people who are most at risk (those who are pregnant, over 70 and who have underlying health conditions) should not take on volunteering roles that could raise their risk of infection, or of passing it onto others who might be at risk.

If anyone under the age of 18 years wishes to volunteer, please see further guidance here: <https://thirdsectorsupport.wales/volunteering/>

Think about: non-contact roles which can be performed through remote access using phones, emails, *facetime* etc. These roles are just as important as many others to prevent loneliness and disconnection.

People who should be in self-isolation with possible infection or at risk of infection, can also undertake these distance roles, if they are well enough, but must not break their isolation to volunteer otherwise.

Social Distancing Guidance

All volunteers **must** follow the latest guidance on social distancing issued by Public Health Wales [Guidance on social distancing for everyone in Wales and protecting older people and vulnerable adults](#)

The situation is changing quickly, so people involved in volunteering and organising volunteers should check this guidance on a daily basis and also read the [daily updates](#) from Public Health Wales to ensure they have the latest information.

Volunteering options

Individuals wishing to volunteer can either engage with informal mutual aid and community volunteering networks and/or sign up to volunteer more formally in a role with an organisation.

Mutual aid/community circles/informal volunteering

Many neighbours have already undertaken to assist and support one another in a very small locality. In most cases, this means that the people involved already know each other, to some extent. No-one should be placed under pressure to participate. Postcards or leaflets pushed through letterboxes have been used to re-introduce neighbours and suggest how they might help and support one another: from simply keeping in contact through phone calls, to dropping off shopping on the doorstep, etc. whilst maintaining social distance.

Details may be found on social media links such as *WhatsApp* and local groups on *Facebook*, etc.

Joining an existing volunteer organisation

Through your local County Voluntary Council [county voluntary council \(CVC\)](#) or [Volunteering Wales](#), you can sign up to undertake a specific volunteering role with a local organisation.

Volunteers should expect to be asked to sign up to a code of conduct required by the organisation.

All volunteers **can** be asked about their unspent convictions (those for which the rehabilitation period has not yet ended (see information here: [Unlock](#))) but *only* as a matter of good practice. This is the same as a DBS basic check but could be a matter of filling in a simple online form.

Some other volunteer roles may require enhanced DBS checks [DBS checks](#) but as these are for roles with contact with the people who are most at risk of conventional safeguarding issues, there will be fewer such opportunities. Roles requiring enhanced DBS checks should be clearly stated on the information.

Safeguarding information for groups and organisations recruiting and using volunteers

Community responses to COVID-19 must put systems and processes in place to safeguard beneficiaries and volunteers from abuse and harm.

Here are top 10 tips to get you started.

Please see our detailed guidance on the website for more information on all these points:

1. Group leaders should provide their contact details to the beneficiaries (the people you will be helping) and a description of the services they are planning to offer
2. Group leaders should create role descriptions for volunteers which identify any need for [DBS checks](#) (or email safeguarding@wcva.cymru with a role description) NB: All volunteers **can** be asked about their unspent convictions (those for which the rehabilitation period has not yet ended (see information here: [Unlock](#))) but only as a matter of good practice. This is the same as a DBS basic check but could be a matter of filling in a simple online form.
3. Group leaders must familiarise themselves with the types of activity which are defined as '[regulated activity](#)' and would require an enhanced DBS check with barring list by law.

4. The service should create a clear system for beneficiaries to alert volunteers to their need for help: volunteers should be informed what to do next – usually to call the emergency services.
5. Group leaders should ensure that volunteers have access to a named co-ordinator who is easily contactable.
6. Volunteers must know that they should contact the Co-ordinator if they have any safeguarding concerns and the Co-ordinator should have a list of contacts to make referrals, e.g. police and social services.
7. Volunteers should follow all Public Health Wales guidance about COVID-19 and security measures should also be observed.
8. Financial transactions must be carefully managed and cash exchange avoided at all costs.
9. Volunteers should use a clear form of identification when communicating with beneficiaries.
10. Where possible, use the existing volunteer workforce, e.g. community drivers and befrienders.

The role of local County Voluntary Councils (CVCs)

What does the CVC (County Voluntary Council) do?

There is a County Voluntary Council in every county which supports voluntary organisations, promotes volunteering and provides information to the public.

CVCs can assist organisations with recruiting and managing volunteers and can also help individuals identify suitable opportunities.

CVCs help those who are looking to volunteer by providing direct support and information, (either face to face or by phone or email) and by managing the national database of volunteering opportunities for their area

www.volunteering-wales.net.

Volunteering Wales Website

The website www.volunteering-wales.net can be searched to find opportunities by location, by category or by key word. Anyone can search, but you will need to register as a volunteer on the website in order to express interest in an opportunity or to obtain contact details.

If you use the link below, then scroll down, you will see opportunities linked to COVID 19, which could be useful. <https://volunteering-wales.net/vk/volunteers/search.htm?searchString=&categories=3042>

The CVC also provides advice and support to organisations and groups, including advice on governance, funding, safeguarding and legal matters and the involvement of volunteers.

You can find contact details for your local County Voluntary Council [here](#).

Find local support groups

Find voluntary services at your fingertips! Find a wide variety of excellent voluntary and community services that are able to provide information and support so that people can make an informed choice.

<https://en.infoengine.cymru/>

<https://www.dewis.wales/>

Here are some key organisations who could help. Remember that many staff are now working remotely. Phone lines may be busy due to high demand. It may be best to email in the first instance.

Organisation	Website	Main contact no. or Advice line	Email address
Age Connects Wales	https://www.ageconnectswales.org.uk/	02920 683600	enquiries@ageconnectswales.org.uk
Provides support to age 50+ people and is made up of 6 independent Age Connects organisations, Check out local services by following link https://www.ageconnectswales.org.uk/contact or ring the main contact number.			

Age Cymru	https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cymru/	08000 223 444 (advice line open Mon-Fri 9am - 5pm)	advice@agecymru.org.uk
Information on benefits, health, money, housing or care for older people, their family, friends, carers and professionals. Check out the website on local area activity or via their email address by including location.			
Alzheimer's Society	https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/about-us/wales	0300 222 122 (National helpline 9am - 5pm for local offices)	Ring the national helpline
Provides a range of information and advice			
All Wales Forum for Parent and Carers	http://www.allwalesforum.org.uk/	029 2081 1120 (9 am – 4pm Monday – Thursday)	Contact email form on their website
Supports parents and carers of people with a learning disability across Wales with information and signposting			
CALL	http://www.callhelpline.org.uk/	0800 132 737 (freephone 24/7) Text 81066	Main contact through the Helpline
The helpline gives emotional support and information on mental health matters in Wales			
Care and Repair Cymru	http://www.careandrepair.org.uk	02920 107580 (ring this number to find out local Care and Repair Services)	https://www.careandrepair.org.uk/en/about-us/contact-us/ to email an enquiry
The helpline gives emotional support and information on mental health matters in Wales			
Carers Trust	https://carers.org/country/carers-trust-wales-cymru	0300 772 9702	wales@carers.org
Support and services for unpaid carers. Have several projects including one's focused on young carers			
Carers Wales	https://www.carersuk.org/wales	02920 811370	info@carerswales.org
Provides expert advice, information and support to unpaid carers, connects carers for mutual support			
CAB (Citizen Advice Bureau)	https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk	03444 772020 (Advice line)	Ring the Helpline
Provide information on benefits, work, money and debit, consumer matters, housing, laws and court processes, immigration and health matters.			
Children in Wales	https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/	02920 342434	Use their contact page to submit an email enquiry https://www.childreninwales.org.uk/contact/

Children in Wales is the umbrella organisation for organisation and individuals who work with children and young people and will be able to signpost to relevant organisations that can help			
Community Housing Cymru	https://chcymru.org.uk/	0290 674810	enquiries@chccymru.org.uk
Represents over 70 not for profit housing associations and provide information on housing matters in Wales.			
Disability Wales	http://www.disabilitywales.org/	02920 887325	info@disabilitywales.org
Information and advice in disability rights			
Hafal	https://www.hafal.org/	01792 816600/832400	hafal@hafal.org
Supports people with serious mental illness and their carers through recovery programmes and self-management			
Useful link to Mental Health and Money Advice https://www.mentalhealthandmoneyadvice.org/wal/			
Learning Disability Wales	https://www.ldw.org.uk/	02920 752149	enquiries@ldw.org.uk
Provided information on all matters related to learning disability in accessible formats			
Marie Curie	https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/who/what-we-do/en	01495 740818	Ring the telephone number for more information
Supports people with terminal illness providing nursing care.			
Mind Cymru	https://www.mind.org.uk/about-us/mind-cymru/	02920 395123 (Mon-Fri 9am-6pm)	info@mind.org.uk
Provides information, support and advice for people with mental health issues and their families/carers Support online: https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/			
British Red Cross	https://www.redcross.org.uk/campaigns/volunteer-in-wales	02920 695740	cardiff@redcross.org.uk
Services in Wales include home from hospital support, wheelchair, commode hire and help with money issues.			
RVS (Royal Voluntary Service)	https://www.royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk/	0330 5550310 (Mon – Fri: 8am-5pm)	Ring the helpline
RVS provides practical support including welfare services and hospital support			
St John's Cymru	https://stjohnswales.org.uk/	02920 449631	pts@stjohnswales.org.uk
St John's Cymru provide hospital transport services across Wales.			
Shelter Cymru	https://sheltercymru.org.uk/	0333 2700182	Ring the helplines

		(Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4pm) Expert debt advice 0333 2700182 (Mon-Fri 9.30am - 4pm)	
Provides information and advice on housing issues and debt for those who find themselves homeless or already are without accommodation.			