

COVID-19: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER RESPONSE start up checklist

Learn more about volunteering or recruiting volunteers to support the response to COVID-19 >>



Getting Started

1. If your organisation is planning to get involved in response to Covid-19 locally, with the priority being to contain and limit the reach of the virus, safeguard volunteers and support vulnerable members in your community - agreement and clear communication on the supports you can offer is vital.

Agree on the purpose of the group: “**XXX Community Group** is responding to the COVID-19 crisis in our community. In the short term, we aim to provide supports to people within our community who have had to self – isolate we may do this through delivery of food, fuel and provisions or other suitable means. We will link with the local pharmacy to deliver prescriptions and signpost queries from people in our communities to existing supports. We will also provide telephone support, providing a listening ear and social contact to those in isolation, passing on official and evidence-based advice.”

2. Identify volunteers within the community group for the following roles:
 - a. **Response Co-Ordinators**
[Responsible for dealing with initial queries from members of the community]
 - b. **Volunteer Co-Ordinators** [Responsible for allocating volunteers to specific roles, checking in with volunteers and managing communications]
 - c. Dispatchers [Responsible for delivery of goods, prescriptions etc.]
 - d. Telephone Support [Responsible for contacting people in isolation, providing information, signposting and a listening ear]
3. Agree on the type of supports your community group can offer:
Delivering shopping, medication for people in isolation | Dog Walking | Telephone Support | etc
4. Define and gather the resources your organisation needs.
Dedicated mobile phone | Hand sanitizers | Gloves | Disinfectant wipes | Access to a laptop
5. Agree how you will recruit volunteers either through local groups or www.volunteerclare.ie and who will oversee the recruitment.
6. Consider engaging in online communication tools like Zoom (zoom.us) to avoid face to face meetings.
7. Ensure there is full agreement and understanding on protocol relating to payment of goods
8. Assess your readiness to engage, manage and safeguard existing and new volunteers.
9. Keep up to date with HSE guidelines on social distancing: <https://www2.hse.ie/coronavirus/>

Assess whether the volunteer is fit to volunteer: see Volunteer Recruitment

Volunteer Recruitment

Prior to recruitment

1. Define the roles that you wish to recruit for- see template role description forwarded for guidance.
2. Assess and manage the risks to the volunteer.
3. Agree the screening tools that you will use to assess volunteer's suitability.
4. Clarify who will be the contact point for volunteers who may apply.
5. Contact your insurance company to ensure that your insurance cover is appropriate for the roles your group is undertaking.
6. Have your Volunteer recruitment pack ready, containing the Volunteer application form, role description, confidentiality agreement etc.
7. Establish communication and logging system for Volunteers.

Volunteers like any member of the public are more at risk of serious illness of contracting the coronavirus if they are:

- 60 years of age and over
- have a long-term medical condition – for example, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, cancer or high blood pressure
- have a weak immune system (immunosuppressed)

There are many things that can cause a weak immune system (immunosuppressed). These include:

- cancer treatment
- treatment for autoimmune diseases, such as rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, multiple sclerosis (MS) and inflammatory bowel diseases
- HIV
- having an organ transplant or a bone-marrow transplant

If an existing or potential volunteer falls into any of the above categories, they still be able to volunteer as a Telephone Support Volunteer, yet the risk must be identified and managed accordingly.

See sample questions to ask existing and potential volunteers >

Volunteer Recruitment

Sample questions to ask existing and potential volunteers:

- Have you travelled outside of Ireland in the past 14 days?
- Have you been in contact with a person who may have the Coronavirus or has been told to self-isolate by a medical professional in the past 14 days.
- Have you displayed any of the symptoms of the Coronavirus in the last 14 days which include but are not limited to:
 - A cough - this can be any kind of cough, not just dry
 - Shortness of breath
 - Breathing difficulties
 - Fever (high temperature - 38 degrees Celsius or above) or chills
 - Other symptoms are fatigue, headaches, sore throat, aches and pains

Explain the need for confidentiality and ask the volunteer to sign a confidentiality agreement:

Issue the volunteer with a copy of your volunteer guidelines and protocol.

Example:

- Do not volunteer if you are unwell, even if you are only experiencing mild symptoms.
- Adhere to social distancing guidelines, avoid physical contact and limit interactions with people.
- Make sure to wash your hands before and after volunteering. Use hand sanitizer and antibacterial wipes after visiting each home.
- Text or ring to alert the person that you will be calling. Stand a minimum of 6 feet away from the door. Do not shake hands or enter any home.
- If a person refers to a neighbor or friend that is in need of support, please advise the Dispatch co-ordinator
- Do not accept cash or gifts

Sample Documents

1. CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT:

I hereby acknowledge, by my signature below, that I understand that the confidential information, records and data to which I have knowledge and access to in the course of volunteering with **XXX Community Group** is to be kept confidential.

This information shall not be disclosed to anyone under any circumstances, except to the extent necessary to fulfil my volunteering role. I understand that my duty to maintain confidentiality continues even after I am longer volunteering.

Signature _____ Date _____

2. CHARACTER DECLARATION:

I hereby declare to the best of my knowledge and belief, there is nothing in relation to my conduct, character or personal background of any nature that would adversely affect the position of trust and confidence in my role as a volunteer with **XXX Community Group**

Signature _____ Date _____

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER RESPONSE

start up checklist

Sample Volunteer Registration Form

We appreciate your willingness to support our local Covid-19 response. Please review the role description provided and if you wish to apply to volunteer please email/post the completed and signed form to XXX.

Do note that all volunteers will be screened for suitability and we are committed to managing and safeguarding volunteers to the best of our ability.

NAME OF ORGANISATION:

Name			
Address			
Contact Number			
Email Address			
Contact Person (<i>in case of emergency</i>)		Contact Phone Number	
Interest Area	<input type="checkbox"/> DISPATCHER	<input type="checkbox"/> TELEPHONE SUPPORT	
Availability	<input type="checkbox"/> MORNINGS	<input type="checkbox"/> AFTERNOON	<input type="checkbox"/> EVENINGS

Your data will be collected only for the purpose of volunteering with **XXX Community Group**. By ticking the box below, you give permission for your contact number to be added to the WhatsApp Group for **XXX Community Group**.

Signature _____ Date _____

As a volunteer with **XXX Community Group**, I understand that the confidential information I have knowledge and access to must be kept confidential. I have signed a Character Declaration form and understand that if the role involves relevant work as defined by the National Vetting Bureau, Garda Vetting will be required. If I am unable to volunteer, I must contact _____ at 000 000 0000

As a volunteer with **XXX Community Group**, I can confirm that I am fit and healthy to volunteer and do not fall into any of the 'at risk categories'

Sample Volunteer Role Description for Covid-19 Practical Support Volunteer

What's involved?

As part of our response to COVID-19 (Coronavirus) we launched a new Covid-19 Practical Support Volunteer role for people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak. By acting as a local point of contact we are providing a listening ear, information and signpost support for people, many of whom feel they have nowhere else to turn. Volunteers are not substituting for HSE staff, home-help or care assistants and must not take on these roles.

Tasks:

- To provide basic practical support for the person where necessary such as assistance with collection and delivery of items to persons including groceries, medical prescriptions and fuel.
- To be flexible around travelling to and from locations.
- To log any support provided to the person on our logging system plus support requests .
- To report any concerns regarding a person's health, safety or welfare to XXXXXX.
- To follow the HSE plus our guidelines throughout your time volunteering with us.
- To be adaptable and flexible within the role which may change over time.
- Work as a member of a team and participate effectively when required.

What's required for this position:

- Active understanding and compliance with HSE guidelines on social distancing, hand hygiene and coughing/sneezing etiquette.
- Ability to prioritise your wellbeing and self-care.
- A confidential, caring, understanding and friendly attitude and the ability to follow directions and agreed guidelines/protocols.
- Good spoken and written English.
- To be patient, reliable and have good listening and communication skills.
- Inform us if you become unwell, need to self-isolate and or no longer available to volunteer.
- Access to a phone, email and a full clean driving licence.

Time required for this position:

We ask that Covid-19 Practical Support Volunteers commit to an initial 3-month period. We envisage that this will be being between 3-4 practical tasks per week, however this may change.

Location:

Your tasks will be based on the amount of help needed by people within your locality and the area of XXX.

Screening details for this role:

- Completion of volunteer registration form
- ID Check and sign volunteer agreement form
- Telephone interview

To apply for the Covid-19 Practical Support Volunteer role you need to complete and return the attached Volunteer Application and Registration form via email to XXXX