

Protecting You and Protecting Others:

Infection prevention advice for volunteers and people helping family, friends and neighbours in their communities

1. Introduction

Thank you for the support you are giving others during the COVID-19 outbreak. We want to ensure that you and others stay safe whilst you carry out this valuable role.

This guidance aims to provide you with advice on how to minimise the risk of catching or spreading the virus.

2. Before you volunteer or offer to help others

Before volunteering or helping family, friends and neighbours in your community, please remember:

You should NOT be leaving your house to volunteer or help others if:

- You have had symptoms of a high temperature and/or a persistent new cough at any point in the past seven days

Or

- Anyone you live with has had a temperature and/or persistent new cough within the past 14 days

If this is the case, you should stay at home, rest and follow the Government's COVID-19 self-isolating guidance, which can be found [here](#)

If you are well and able to provide support, please move on to section 3 for further considerations on how to protect yourself and others.

3. Before coming into contact with the person/household you are supporting, consider the following:

- Is the person or anyone in their household self-isolating (i.e. had symptoms of COVID-19 within the past 7 days)?
- Or, is the household isolating (i.e. is the household in the 14 day 'household-isolating' period because someone at the property showed symptoms of COVID-19)?

Guidance on self-isolating can be found [here](#)

If the answer is '**Yes**' to either of these questions, we recommend you maintain social distancing, and do not enter the house or share a vehicle with the person.

If you are planning to help someone who is suspected of having COVID-19 (or they live with someone suspected of having COVID-19) you should ensure the organisation you are volunteering on behalf of has completed a risk assessment to determine the level of risk and personal protective equipment (PPE) you require. They are also responsible for providing PPE and ensuring you can put it on, take it off and dispose of it safely.

If the answer is '**No**' to the questions above, check the following:

- Has the person you are supporting (or anyone in their household) been identified as being extremely vulnerable'? (i.e. have they received a letter or been told by a health professional that they need to 'shield' for 12 weeks)?

See [here](#) for the list of conditions that requires someone to shield.

It is important to know if someone is shielding because you may need to take extra precautions to keep them safe.

Once you have checked that the person (and their household) are not suspected of having COVID-19 and you've found out if they (or other household members) are shielding, you can then check the table in the next section (section 4) to see what steps you can take to protect yourself and others.

4. Summary of infection prevention advice for volunteers and people providing support to family, friends and neighbours within their communities (when supporting people/households who are NOT suspected of having COVID-19).

Scenario	Good hand and respiratory hygiene (see 4.1)	Follow social distancing guidance (see 4.2)	Ventilate shared areas where possible (see 4.3)	Minimise the time spent together with others in a shared space (see 4.4)	Wipe down hard surfaces (see 4.5)	PPE: disposable gloves (see 4.6)	PPE: disposable plastic apron (see 4.6)	PPE: face mask (see 4.6)	PPE: Eye/Face Protection (see 4.6)
A. Shopping for and delivering food (when not entering the person's home)	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✗	✗	✗	✗
B. Picking up and delivering a prescription (when not entering the person's home)	✓	✓	n/a	✓	n/a	✗	✗	✗	✗
C. Carrying out tasks in a person's home (e.g. cooking, unpacking shopping) – able to maintain a distance of 2 metres, when NO household member is shielding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
D. Carrying out tasks in a person's home (e.g. cooking, cleaning, unpacking shopping) – able to maintain a distance of 2 metres, when member of household IS shielding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
E. Transporting a person in your own vehicle (e.g. to a hospital appointment or home from hospital), when individual is NOT shielding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
F. Transporting a person in your own vehicle (e.g. to a hospital appointment or home from hospital), when individual IS shielding	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓ Surgical mask	✗
G. Carrying out hands-on caring tasks (e.g. helping a person to wash, toilet, get in and out of bed)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓ *	✓ Where splashing may occur

✓ recommended ✓* Only if person is shielding (surgical face mask) or there is a risk of contact with body fluids (fluid repellent face mask)
✓ if risk assessment indicates it is required ✗ not recommended n/a not applicable

Further Information

4.1. Good hand and respiratory hygiene

Hand hygiene:

- Wash your hands regularly with liquid soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. Use paper towels to dry your hands. Dispose of paper towels in the bin.
- If you do not have access to hand washing facilities (e.g. if you are in your car), it is recommended you carry a bottle of water (preferably warm), liquid soap, paper towels and a bag to dispose of used towels, so you can wash your hands remotely
- Where there are not hand washing facilities, you can use hand sanitiser if available (this needs to be re-applied regularly)
- Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth with unwashed hands

Further information on hand washing is available [here](#).

Respiratory hygiene:

- Carry tissues, so if you sneeze or cough, you can cover it. Dispose of used tissues immediately. If in a vehicle, carry a bag to put tissues in and dispose of the bag when able to. If tissues are not available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve or the inside of your elbow. Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing.

4.2. Follow social distancing guidance

Wherever possible maintain a distance of 2 metres from people.

Further social distancing guidance can be found [here](#).

4.3. Ventilate shared areas where possible

Open windows where possible to allow fresh air to circulate in the rooms or vehicle you are in (check the person is able to maintain a comfortable body temperature and is not sat directly in a draught).

4.4. Minimise the time spent together in a shared space

Especially when sharing a vehicle or other small space. When in a person's home, minimise the time spent together in the same room.

4.5. Wipe down hard surfaces

This is especially important when the person you are supporting or another person in the household is shielding. Wipe down surfaces in bathrooms and kitchens after you have used them. This can be done using a cloth and detergent (such as washing-up detergent or other household surface cleaner).

If transporting a person who is shielding in your vehicle, wipe down hard surfaces that the person may come into contact with before they get into the car.

If someone in a household is shielding and you are carrying out chores in the kitchen, use a dishwasher to clean and dry the family's used crockery and cutlery. If this is not possible, wash them using washing up liquid and warm water and dry them thoroughly. Use a separate tea towel for drying the utensils of a person who is shielding.

The criteria for shielding can be found [here](#)

4.6. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

Most volunteers and people offering help to family, friends and neighbours will not require PPE. However in a small number of circumstances it is recommended.

When you are unable to maintain a 2 metre (3 step) distance from an individual (within a vehicle or the person's home), a risk assessment will need to be completed to assess the level of PPE required. This should be completed by the organisation you are volunteering on behalf of. This organisation is also responsible for providing any volunteers with PPE (and this PPE should meet the required standards).

If a volunteer requires the use of PPE, they should also be trained in donning (putting on) and doffing (taking off) any equipment. Videos are available to support training [here](#). Guidance is available [here](#)

Where hands-on care is being given (contact within 2 metres) in a household where NO person is self-isolating, or if you have to have physical contact with a person to help them in/out of a vehicle

(Reminder: Self-isolating is required when an individual has shown symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 7 days, or a member of their household have shown symptoms in the past 14 days).

The volunteer should wear the following PPE:

Where a risk assessment indicates that the volunteer will not be exposed to body fluids, in order to protect you and others the following PPE is required:

- Disposable apron
- Disposable gloves
- Plus, if the person being cared for is shielding, you will also need: a standard surgical face mask

Where a risk assessment indicates that contact with body fluids is likely, the following PPE is required:

- Disposable apron
- Disposable gloves

- Fluid repellent surgical face mask (Type 11R)
- Eye protection where there is a risk of splashing

The need for a surgical fluid repellent face mask and eye protection should be assessed by the organisation the volunteer is working on behalf of prior to any contact between the volunteer and the individual and/or their household.

N.B. Any PPE being worn should be renewed for each new household a volunteer comes into contact with.

Once the PPE has been removed it should be disposed of safely in a bin. Always wash your hands before and after donning/doffing PPE.

NB. PPE should not be subject to continued use if damaged, soiled, uncomfortable or damp.

The national guidance on PPE can be found [here](#)

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