



Community member support group Volunteer guide

Please ensure you have a copy of this guide, either printed or available on your mobile phone to show if the Police or other authorities ask to see it.

A helping hand through hard times

Times are tough for our members across the UK, with COVID-19 causing confusion and uncertainty, many of the most vulnerable in society are stuck at home with nobody to help them out. We knew we had to do something, so we put our heads together and came up with an idea.

We have a proud history of taking trade unionism out of the workplace and into the local community, the idea that looking out for one another even after your shift ends is an important part of what it means to be a Community member.

Our community member support group is a shining example of what happens when we put our principle of helping others who cannot help themselves into action. As a volunteer you will be the helping hand that reaches across the country and ensures that nobody is without support.

This guidebook outlines a few basic considerations regarding the volunteer work, we ask that you carefully read and follow the advice and guidance this booklet offers.



This is going to be a huge team effort, but we're up for the challenge. Let's get out there and make a positive difference for our members and their loved ones.

Tiffany Gillies
CSG co-ordinator

Our aim

“Making sure that everyone gets the help they need.”

Mission statement:



Support people who can't leave their house by delivering food and medicine

Lending an ear over the phone to people who may be self-isolating alone

Working with the local community to expand the volunteer network and bring more helpers on board

Working with the local authorities to seek specialist support for extremely vulnerable people

Before you volunteer

As a volunteer, it's likely you'll be coming into contact with extremely vulnerable people as you offer them help. Are you well enough to be able to do this? Your own safety is incredibly important to us.

Limiting the spread of the virus is also a huge priority. If you believe that you could be at risk of carrying the virus and passing it on to other people, we would kindly ask that you refrain from volunteering.

Volunteering also presents other potential risks, collecting shopping means standing in crowded areas and having to be conscious of yourself and others when grabbing what you need. If you don't feel confident about the things that will be asked of you we kindly ask that you refrain from volunteering.

Helping those in need

Keep it clean

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with warm and soapy water before and after every form of contact. If soap and water aren't available, use 60% alcohol hand sanitiser. Always wash your hands properly before eating and on returning to your home – before you touch anything or anyone.

Think about your own safety first and the person you are supporting. Don't touch other people and wash your hands before and after touching surfaces. 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 into contact with.



Shopping can be delivered on the doorstep, but please minimise any handling. If you can, wear disposable gloves and throw these away after each visit.

Ensure shopping bags are not heavy and are easy to lift up, if possible, bag the shopping into small amounts. Wait to see the shopping has been collected, and to ensure the vulnerable person is okay.

Keep a distance of at least 2 metres away, whilst the shopping is being collected and wash your hands or use hand sanitiser before moving on to the next contact.

It is understood that Coronavirus can live on money for up to 24 hours - consider how you handle money safely and securely. If possible, wear disposable gloves when handling cash.

Money to pay for shopping can be placed in an envelope and then into a container like a tupperware box. The box can be kept in a safe place and left untouched for at least 24 hours.

If you are giving someone change for shopping, then this must be placed into a sealed envelope and placed into the shopping bag. You must inform the person where the change is, and they must leave it untouched for at least 24 hours before opening it.

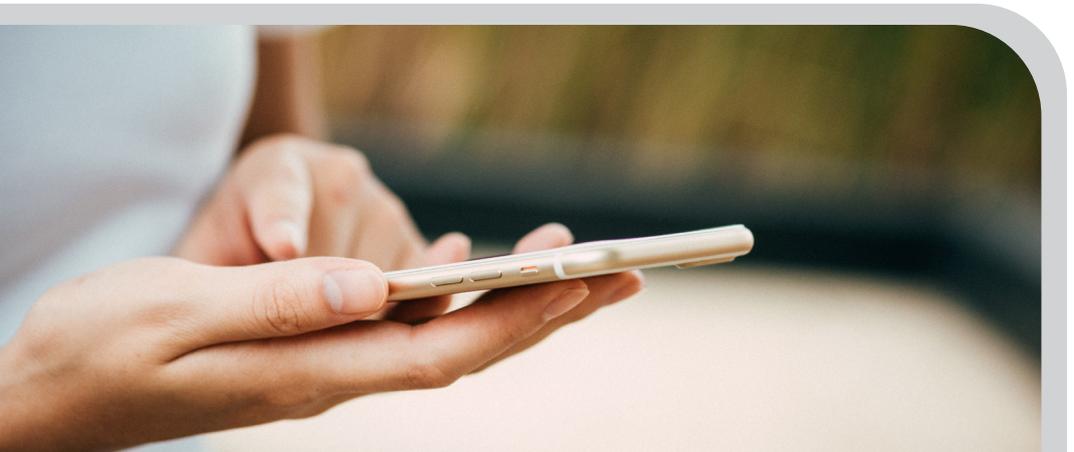
Where possible, we recommend you transfer money electronically, however this should be a pre-agreed arrangement between volunteer and the person they are supporting.*

Volunteers should not take debit or credit cards from individuals or take any PIN numbers from cards.*

Many people have pay-as-you-go meters that require a charging key to be topped up at a pay point shop. Wear disposable gloves if possible, to accept the charging key, on receipt of the key clean it with 60% alcohol wipes or sanitiser.

Before returning the key to the householder, clean the key again with 60% alcohol wipes or sanitiser. Either place the key through the letterbox or leave in a pre-agreed safe place. Make sure the vulnerable person is informed they should not touch the key for at least 24 hours.*

**Community is not liable for any monetary disputes between volunteers and the vulnerable. To make transactions easier we recommend making notes of any cash agreements you make between yourself and any third parties.*



Stay safe

Always keep us in the loop regarding where you're going and what time you expect to return home, always ensure you have a mobile phone with you at all times in case of emergency.

If you are supporting someone you know it's likely they will trust you, but people you don't know may be nervous/anxious about the support you are willing to offer them.

Do not act on the assumption that someone needs help and call on them unexpectedly, we'll get the ball rolling and pair you with a vulnerable person from our side.

If you hear of more people that want to help, great! Volunteering is a great show community spirit. To ensure we are doing our bit to protect you and safeguard the vulnerable we ask that you encourage any new would-be volunteers to speak to us first, just so we're aware of who's who and what they're up to whilst helping on behalf of the union.

Being Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) cleared is not a requirement of volunteering, but does provide vulnerable individuals with a bit of security and may help to ease their anxieties in dealing with strangers. If you are PVG cleared, please let us know.

If you are unsure as to whether something is safe, **don't do it.** Report any safety issues to us as soon as possible so we can support you.

If you start to feel unwell or have a cough and/or temperature, stay at home and let us know as soon as possible.

Know what to do

We will have already agreed the rules with the person you're helping of what to do if there is a lack of response when a volunteer arrives, and will give you all the information we have to you before you go out to help them. On the rare occasion that you're left uncertain of what to do in a situation, get in touch with us.

A simple tip for an unresponsive house is to check for activity - is there a TV or radio on? Is there a car on the drive? You may have to look in a window or letter box to see if there are any signs of recent activity. Remember people who have mobility issues may take longer than average to get to the door or window.

Always exhaust all options and contact us before contacting the emergency services on 999. **This action should only be taken as a last resort and if you are absolutely certain the person is inside but are not responding. Our emergency services are extremely busy at the moment and we are committed to ensuring their time is spent helping those that need it.**

Self-isolation and spending time alone may be a cause for people to feel lonely, but it's important to keep a cool head and follow social distancing at all times. If you're invited in for a cup of tea and a chat **you must always say no**. Although you may feel like you are being rude by declining their offer you must remember you are doing this in their and your best interest.* You could stop and have a chat at their door, so long as you are at least 2 metres away.

Community is not liable for any health complications that arise as a result of you refusing to follow our guidelines. If at any time you are found to have not been following the guidelines stated above this may lead to the revoking of your volunteer status. **If in doubt, ask.*



Working alongside you

Keep us in the loop

Your Regional team will get in touch when a member in your area has asked for help. We'll do the work to ensure that you're partnered up with the people you could best provide a helping hand to.

To ensure everyone that needs help, gets it we ask that you keep us in the loop throughout the day regarding who you're helping, when you've helped them and if you have to finish your volunteering shift early for whatever reason, keep us in the know so that we can work around you.

If at any point during your time as a volunteer you run into an obstacle, please let us know as soon as possible. We are all one team and we are here to help each other as much as possible.

A fair day's pay

Our principle is and always will be that no union volunteer should ever be out of pocket, however in these unprecedented times we are asking volunteers to consider not making an expense claim. If you need to claim expenses, we will help you reimburse actual costs on fuel, on production of receipts. Any money that isn't paid out as an expense will go directly to helping our most vulnerable members.*

**Due to the current situation, volunteers will need to firstly provide us with bank details for expenses, as we are only able to reimburse via BACS.*

Share your story!

We want to promote the excellent work our members are doing so we can reach out to others who need us. If you can, and if it's safe to do so, please take every opportunity to take photos and send us your stories about how you have supported our members. You may inspire our next volunteer!





Lend an ear

Sometimes the only thing a vulnerable person doesn't have is someone to talk to. If you don't feel best suited to be out and about then our befriending service is a great opportunity to help in a different way. To learn more about this speak to your local regional team.

A huge thank you

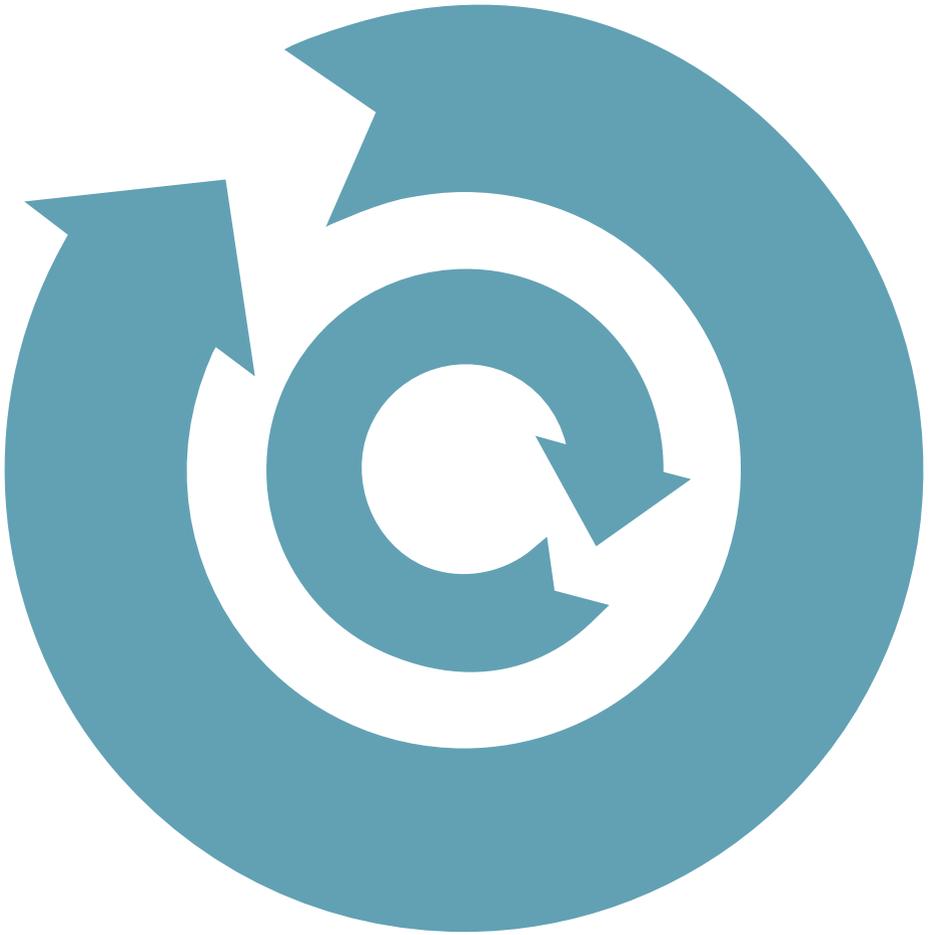
Volunteering to help in these difficult and unprecedented times is a character defining act. It's great to know our union has people like you who are prepared to help others

These acts of kindness are what makes our members exceptional and it's what our movement was built on, people who are prepared to put others first and support fellow members who are in need.

For the Police or relevant authorities

Community Union has created a register of all our volunteers who are supporting vulnerable people throughout this difficult time.

Please contact volunteer@community-tu.org or telephone 07540756318 if you need any further information.



We are Community.

The modern union for a changing world.

Tel: 0800 389 6332 • **Email:** volunteer@community-tu.org

Web: community-tu.org • **Twitter:** [@CommunityUnion](https://twitter.com/CommunityUnion) • **Facebook:** [CommunityUnion](https://www.facebook.com/CommunityUnion)