

Volunteer Protocol

Camden is full of generous people. At times like these, it is more important than ever that we come together and look out for each other. We are working with the voluntary and community sector, as well as adult social care, public health and the NHS to mobilise volunteers to support where there is the greatest need.

We want to work together safely so have agreed this set of protocols that we will all need to work to. We have also produced a [series of short videos](#) with further advice and guidance.

Stay safe when supporting others¹

- Let family and friends know what you're doing.
- Support family, friends and neighbours by phone or video call where possible.
- Stay at least two metres - about three steps - away from people you're helping.
- Offer to run errands for people but stay outside of people's homes.
- Keep washing your hands often for 20 seconds, particularly before and after a volunteering activity.
- Don't take on too much - it's often better not to offer at all than to let someone down.
- If you're trying to help someone with very serious issues – don't be afraid to flag with the appropriate statutory services.

Be a safe and reliable volunteer²

To prevent the spread of infection please **do not volunteer if:**

- You have a temperature and/or a new continuous cough and/or a loss or change to your sense of smell or taste. *Please self-isolate immediately and stay at home for 7 days.*
- Someone in your household has a temperature or a new continuous cough. *Please stay at home with all household members for 14 days from the day the first person got symptoms.*
- You or someone you live with are aged over 70.
- You or someone you live with are an adult with an underlying health condition including:
 - Long-term respiratory diseases – such as asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease;
 - Long-term heart disease – such as heart failure;
 - Kidney disease;
 - Liver disease – such as hepatitis;
 - Neurological conditions – such as Parkinson's disease, motor neurone disease, multiple sclerosis, a learning disability, or cerebral palsy;
 - Diabetes;

¹ See [NCVO](#) for more information. Government has also published [advice](#) on volunteering safely.

² See Camden & Islington Public Health for more information.

- Problems with your spleen – such as sickle cell disease, or your spleen has been removed;
- Weakened immune system – resulting from conditions such as HIV and AIDS, or medicines such as steroid tablets or chemotherapy;
- Seriously overweight (body mass index of 40+);
- Pregnancy.

If none of the above applies to you, please follow the **good hand washing and respiratory hygiene**:

- Wash your hands often - with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or if soap is unavailable use a hand sanitiser when you get home or into work.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who have symptoms.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in a bin and wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as door handles.

Further considerations while volunteering to **prevent physical contact**:

- You should not be going into someone's home.
- Avoid face to face conversations, where possible.
- If conversations are an important part of volunteering support, please stay more than two metres away from the vulnerable person.
- If you have to be indoors, please limit conversations to less than 15 minutes.
- If appropriate and possible, look to have a window open if you're volunteering in a room for a long time.
- Leave any items on the doorstep when delivering them to someone.
- Wash your hands fully before and after each interaction, or use a hand sanitiser if this is not possible.
- Ask the person you are helping to wash their hands too (particularly after they have received a home delivery).
- If you think you have come into contact with someone with COVID-19 symptoms through your volunteering, please don't be alarmed. Let someone know in the organisation and watch to see if you start having symptoms. This may not happen, but if it does, please self-isolate in the usual way. If you have had close recent contact with someone who has coronavirus, you must self-isolate if the NHS test and trace service advises you to do so. More information [here](#).

If you do not have a current **DBS certificate** (used to be referred as CRB or Criminal Records Check), you should not be carrying out activities such as looking after children or providing help with washing and dressing vulnerable people. However, many of the roles that you can carry out in your local community do not raise safeguarding issues and do not need a DBS check as they do not involve direct physical contact with vulnerable adults or children.²

² For more information about DBS checks, please see [here](#).

Remember that, as per Government’s advice, if you are volunteering with someone not from the same household, **you and the other volunteer must stay two metres apart at all times.**

If you are making **deliveries** such as food or prescriptions:

- Avoid going into someone’s home.
- Leave delivery at doorstep, step back and call them (by phone) to tell them the delivery is there.
- Check they have received the delivery before leaving.
- Avoid touching doors.
- Do not travel on public transport.
- Wash your hands before and after delivery (keep a bottle of alcohol hand sanitiser on you if you have one).

Please remind the **recipient**:

- To remove outer packaging and put straight in bin.
- To wash surface where package has been placed.
- To wash hands before and after delivery.
- To thoroughly wash all fruit and vegetables before cooking.
- Normal safe cooking processes will remove the virus.

Picking up **prescriptions**:

- Prescription arrangements should be made directly between people who know and trust one another or through established organisations who have trusted and DBS checked volunteers.
- Prescription pickups and deliveries should be tracked by the volunteer organiser.
- The local pharmacist may have arrangements in place so check with them first.

When people in social isolation seek support, the person in your group assigning the task should agree with them a unique **daily password** of their choosing (*per person, per day e.g. “sausages”, “moon”, “25”*) and give this to you so that you can be identified at the door. This must change each day for each person.

Financial safeguarding³

- It is better to have **no money** changing hands and so those helped are asked to organise payment remotely with the shop where possible.
- If this is not possible, volunteers should front money for shopping and be paid back but ensure the recipient has the money before shopping (to reduce the risk in not being paid back, unless you know the person).⁴ Get agreement first with the person being supported about how much money is to be spent and for what items. Confirm this with a text message if possible.
- Keep receipts and either photograph them and send them electronically or hand them over on receipt of payment.

³ See [Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK](#) Safeguarding Training for more information.

⁴ If the person you are helping cannot pay for their grocery, please get in touch with the council (see below).

- If you go to the shop and are on your way back, ask the person to prepare the appropriate amount for payment so it is ready for you when you deliver.
- You can transfer money online (but be mindful of data protection – see below).
- Cheques are also great.
- Cash should be put in an envelope (or in anything that suits, such as a freezer food bag if you do not have an envelope) and handled as little as possible. Wash or sanitise hands after handling cash.

Do not go out and get money on someone's card - only close friends and family can do that for someone.

If you want to avoid handling money, many organisations are piloting new methods, such as supermarkets with [volunteer shopping cards](#) and banks with [companion cards](#). Some local shops will also be happy to organise payment remotely (by phone). Additionally, [Payout Now](#) is a new way to withdraw cash without leaving your home. Originally available only in Post Office branches, it's now being rolled out to banks, building societies and credit unions. For more vulnerable people there is [Money Carer](#) which has a carer shopping card. Our ASC service may well already be working with this organisation as it runs an [Appointee Service](#) for DWP.

If you are part of a small group handling funds you should:

- Set up a new separate bank account, even if it is still in one person's name.
- Any financial management should involve three or more unrelated people managing this to avoid allegations of fraud. You could set up a bank account on behalf of your group but this may take a week or more.
- It should be easy for the people managing funds to be changed.
- There should be a way for people to comment on the handling of funds.

Be a responsible volunteer organiser

If you are asking people to shop for others you should:

- Keep a record of who you have asked to go where and when that transaction is completed.
- Delete personal information once it is no longer needed.
- Follow all the guidance above.
- Stay at home and be available for on-the ground volunteers as much as possible.

Data protection

- All personal information should be treated sensitively.
- Particular care should be taken where data is stored in spreadsheets - delete personal information as soon as possible, and definitely if you no longer need that data.
- Only collect data that you absolutely need, e.g. address, dietary preferences (rather than ethnicity or religion), whether the volunteer drives or is DBS-checked, etc.
- Have a policy for how you manage any data and share the responsibility for that between three or four people.

The six principles of the General Data Protection Requirement (GDPR) are:

Lawfulness, fairness and transparency	Have we collected data in good faith with the right notice?
Purpose limitation	Have we clearly stated what the purpose is for?
Data minimisation	Do you need all the data your collecting or can it be reduced?
Accuracy	Have all efforts been made to make sure that data is accurate?
Storage limitation	Is the data being deleted when it is not needed anymore?
Integrity and confidentiality	Is the data being kept securely?

Spreadsheets raise particular concerns that data may fall into the wrong hands, leaving people vulnerable to scams or abuse. Think about **protecting your spreadsheet** with a password.

Social media

Be aware that many networking apps such as Whatsapp, Messenger, Skype and Zoom often make phone numbers visible. It is wise to make new members aware of this. You can use the following text: ‘Please be mindful that this does share your number with the wider group and by joining you opt into that being OK’.⁵

You should not take pictures of the people you are helping and you should never post them on social media.

What to do if someone needs on-going support that you cannot provide

You can refer someone self-isolating who needs prescriptions or food to **Camden Council on 0207 974 4444 and choose option 9.**

You can also visit here Camden’s [website](#) which will help you find a local VCS organisation which can help with everyday tasks that people might be struggling with.

If someone needs shielding from the virus because they are in an extremely vulnerable category, they can register for help on the government [website](#).

For residents that are registered with a GP in Camden and who have complex needs and long-term health conditions, the [Care Navigators](#) team will be able to support them so that the care they receive is joined up and seamless, ensuring they receive the right help at the right time, and in the right place.

⁵ See [Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK](#) Safeguarding Training for more information.

What do you need to do if you are concerned about someone in other ways

In Camden we are fully committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults. Safeguarding is about preventing abuse of children and adults who may be made vulnerable and promoting their welfare. We are all responsible to ensure everyone in the community is safe in their environment. You may become concerned about someone you are helping. It is important not to ignore this. If you need to report someone who you think is at risk of abuse you can report them to:

Children

- **If you believe a child is in immediate danger you should call the police on 999**
- If you are worried about a child or young person, please contact the Children & Families Contact Team on 020 7974 3317 or LBCMASHadmin@camden.gov.uk
- If you do not feel comfortable about telling us, or you are not sure if you are right, you can also speak to a teacher, health visitor, doctor or the [NSPCC](#). **The most important thing is to tell someone who can help.**
- If you are concerned a child is being sexually exploited, there are some key signs you can look out for. To find out more, as well as how to report your concerns, click [here](#).

Adults

- Everyone has the right to live a life that is free from abuse, harm and neglect.
- If you are worried about an adult please call 020 7974 4000 and select option 1, or email us using the link below. **If you think an adult is in immediate danger you should call the police on 999 (urgent) or dial 101 (non-urgent).**
- An adult with care and support needs may be more at risk of, or already experiencing, abuse or neglect because they:
 - are unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from harm,
 - depend on others for their care, ○ lack the mental capacity to take a particular decision.
- If you are concerned about an adult, please email: adultsocialcare@camden.gov.uk
- Whilst helping a vulnerable adults, If you see something, are told something or something doesn't feel right, you need to report it to: asc.mash.safeguarding@camden.gov.uk

If you meet someone who needs support you can signpost them to the following organisations. You can pass these contact details on to the person needing support. You should not contact these organisations on their behalf as that may involve sharing personal information without permission.

- If someone is seeking support for **domestic violence** they can contact Camden Safety Net.

Email: camdensafetynet@camden.gov.uk

Website: <http://www.camden.gov.uk/domesticviolence>

Phone: 020 7974 2526 / TextPhone: 07814 671427

- If someone needs **home living support** because they are living alone and struggling with their **mobility** or their **memory** call Camden Careline.

Email: carelinetelecareadmin@camden.gov.uk

Website: <http://camden.gov.uk/careline>

Phone: 020 7974 1491 (option 4)

- If someone you are helping is struggling with their **mental health** they/you can phone the Camden and Islington Crisis Line on their behalf 02033176777.