

Fact Sheet to support parishes setting up or helping with community support activities during the Coronavirus emergencies.

March 2020 v1

- ✓ This fact sheet is to help set out the duty of care, and responsible actions that PCC's should be aware of when supporting or undertaking community support activities for those who are vulnerable.
- ✓ It is important for your PCC/ leadership group to consider what is already available so that there can be good joining up of support to people. Many councils have already got a range of options for how people can help out in their local community, on line eg: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/covid-19/>
- ✓ It might be sensible to think about volunteering for a local charity or community group that is already set up to meet the needs of vulnerable people where there are good structures in place already but where there is a need for more people to help out.
- ✓ Where there are gaps in resources please pause and carefully consider what you are able to do in a way that is safe for the volunteer and people in need; where plans and resources can be relatively sustainable and expectations can be managed.
- ✓ The health and welfare of all volunteers and of those they seek to support is paramount and anyone who has a concern about someone should talk this through and report concerns in all the usual ways (contact details at the end of this fact sheet).
- ✓ More generally, the national church website, the diocesan and Cathedral website, the Church of England, ACAS, the NHS, and Public Health England all have current information – the links are at the end of this fact sheet.

Throughout the Coronavirus emergencies the safeguarding team, (Judith, Becca, Brett and Kat e<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/safeguarding/>) is operating as business as usual as much as possible, we are busy setting up working remotely but the email and out of hours safeguarding phone from our website are all working so do get in touch with any concerns – and we will keep information updated as fast as we can!

We are also aware that PCCs are no longer able to meet face to face to discuss these issues. Archdeacons will be sending out more information as things progress, but there is some guidance at this link of how to hold virtual meetings if you aren't sure:

<https://www.gloucester.anglican.org/2020/cancellation-of-pcc-meetings/>

1. What should the PCC have in mind when setting up an activity?

A: It is important to have a clear set of arrangements so that everyone knows what is expected of them, so that boundaries can be set, and people know where to go for more advice or support.

It is likely that many of those in need of support will be vulnerable and isolated, and so the PCC must be mindful of safeguarding good practice so that everyone, especially those with less experience than others, feel confident, and can play a clear role as part of their community.

2. Does the PCC have insurance cover for activities?

A: PCC activities are covered within the normal parish insurance arrangements so long as there is good guidance and oversight in place. In the event of any claim your insurer would expect you to have been diligent in setting things up and having thought through risks, tasks etc. and made appropriate plans.

3. Can we use anyone who wants to help as a volunteer? Do they need a DBS check? What do we do if our volunteers don't have time to complete online training (basic or foundation?)

A: It is likely many volunteers will come forward because they want to help and we all want to encourage this – but be mindful of basic volunteer good practice and national guidance (these national links may be helpful

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/ParishSafeGuardingHandBookAugust2019Web.pdf>

https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-11/Safer%20Environment%20and%20Activities%20Oct19_0.pdf

There are some practical and pragmatic emergency measures that can be applied as cogent reasons for following practical emergency steps: For example;

- ✓ If volunteers you do not know well or who have not already been safely recruited by the Church come forward to help don't turn them away but ask them to complete a simple application form:
<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Application%20form%20template%20%28Appendix%203%29%20-%20Safer%20Recruitment.docx>
- ✓ Take up references – even verbally is better than nothing keep a note of what was said and confirm by email if that is possible. The application form is also useful if

you are building up resources and its good to be aware of what skills and experiences someone might be able to offer.

- ✓ Whilst people might want to volunteer immediately we are set to live in challenging times for some months, and people should be genuinely pleased that you are taking responsibility for making sure volunteers and those being supported are kept as safe as possible and taking just a day or two to get things established well is important.
- ✓ Check where a volunteer role requires a DBS check: <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Church%20of%20England%20role%20%20%28Appendix%208%29%20-%20Safer%20Recruitment.pdf>) and ensure that people are recruited using normal national safer recruitment processes: (<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-11/Safer%20recruiting%20in%20the%20parish%20%28Appendix%201%29%20-%20Safer%20Recruitment.pdf>). All records should be kept just like normal. Most checks at this level can be done on the Online Update service, free to volunteers, and there is new government guidance for how identity documents to confirm things can be shared on this link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-standard-and-enhanced-id-checking-guidelines> and the parish Safeguarding Officer or activity coordinator should keep records as normal (the online update process is annually rechecked and rechecks are also free for volunteers).
- ✓ For those who would normally be required or recommended to undertake the basic and foundation level safeguarding courses give them the link to the training. Keep a careful record of who they are and when they have completed it. The national safeguarding team are making access to the online training links quicker. If your volunteer is not able to do this before they start make a record of this and encourage them to do it at a later date.
- ✓ For those who would be required to undertake leadership roles – again keep a careful note and as soon as possible ensure they have completed Basic and Foundation on line levels – the leadership level can be completed later when the diocesan events resume.

4. How do we provide pastoral care when we are following guidance on social distancing and visiting those who are self isolating?

A: There are a range of things to have in mind for example:

- ✓ Discourage volunteers from entering people's homes.
- ✓ Encourage volunteers to communicate by telephone/ email/ whats app etc.
- ✓ Make a locally agreed plan for exchanging goods and money based on the current government guidance. This may include leaving goods on the doorstep.

- ✓ If there is a parish newsletter, magazine, or other information that would enable someone to feel part of wider communities drop those off with any shopping etc that people need.
- ✓ When visiting someone make sure the person being called upon is called ahead of the visit to make sure they are expecting the visit and it is still ok.
- ✓ Pastoral concerns can also be followed up by phone especially where someone is self isolating or (potentially) has the virus.

5. What are the safeguarding concerns we should be thinking about?

A: There are a range of things to keep in mind for example:

- ✓ Be clear what is being asked of a volunteer (don't encourage them just to do something off their own bat).
- ✓ Make sure that anyone visiting anyone has oversight from someone coordinating things from the church.
- ✓ Make sure that anyone visiting gives a bit of feedback and keeps others up to date with how their vulnerable person/family are doing so its clear when any serious concerns need to be referred/reported.
- ✓ Give volunteers a card with the Church Logo, your name and a contact person (the coordinator for example) so that the person being visited can double check who the person (and if they don't know someone they should be encouraged to do this).
- ✓ Do not let anyone pay for shopping (or utility top ups) in advance. Ensure that volunteers are keeping a record of what money they receive for shopping and that a copy of the receipt should be given to the volunteer or leader.
- ✓ All volunteers should wash their hands before and after a visit and use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't immediately available.

6. What about foodbanks?

A: Please encourage people as much as possible to support local foodbanks so they do not need to close during this crisis. Contact the foodbank and use their procedures and arrangements for dropping off or collecting donations.

7. We have been asked to join a new community group in the area do we have to follow the guidance above?

A: If **volunteering as a church member** then follow the guidance above.

A: If **volunteering as an individual** then please ensure this is done safely to protect everyone involved. If there is not safeguarding guidance following up to date local authority and/or government guidance and the safeguarding guidance for a group all are welcome to use the diocesan safeguarding guidance too.