

## Coronavirus information

# Volunteering

## Top tips for working alone in the community

**Volunteering to help your neighbours is a great way to make a difference to those who need support during this time. We want to make sure that this is a positive experience for you as well as the older people in your community. Although you may be comfortable in your neighbourhood, it's worth taking a few extra precautions as you go out in the community on your own.**

**We've put together our top tips for staying safe when volunteering on your own.**

---

### Keep in touch

- Have a buddy system in place. This could be a volunteer manager or colleague at your organisation. Or it could just be someone you trust, like a friend or relative. Let this person know where you're going.
- Check in with your buddy with a text or call when you arrive and when you leave so that they know you are safe.
- Make sure your buddy also has your number so they can reach you in case they don't hear from you by a pre-agreed time.
- If you're volunteering for a local Age UK and your safety buddy/contact is concerned about you, they can contact the local Age UK directly. Consider giving your buddy your local Age UK's contact details before you begin your role.
- If you are volunteering independently and your safety buddy/contact is concerned for your safety, please ask them to contact the police.

### Plan ahead

A little preparation can help you feel safe in case you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation.

- Agree your volunteer schedule with your volunteer manager, colleague or buddy beforehand. They should know the general area where you will be in and at what time you will be completing your visits.
- Agree a 'safe phrase' with your buddy in case you need them to get you help without alerting those around you. You could contact them and say something like, 'Can you put the forms in the post for me please?' Whichever phrase you agree on, they will know to contact help for you.
- Only carry with you what is necessary – leave your valuables at home.

### Be aware

- Be mindful of your surroundings—who is around and what is happening around you?
  - Keep to well-lit spaces that are visible to others.
-

## Volunteering

Top tips for working alone in the community

- Keep your distance—social distancing still applies when you are volunteering. Any support you offer should be done from outside of your neighbour's home wherever possible.
- For more in-depth safety advice, please see our safety guidance.

### Trust yourself

- If someone is starting to show signs of aggression, stay calm, keep your distance, make note of the nearest escape route and be ready in case you want to call for help.
- If something doesn't seem right to you, leave.

### Consider Coronavirus

- Maintain social distancing measures (2 metres) whilst volunteering – with other volunteers and with people you are providing help for.
- Be conscious of good hand hygiene whilst volunteering. You should regularly wash your hands with soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Catch coughs and sneezes in a tissue and bin it.

- Be aware of the presence of virus on surfaces.
- Where possible, do not enter another person's home while volunteering.

For more coronavirus guidance see 'Procedure for Staff and Volunteers supporting an unknown person or one with suspected coronavirus'.

## Thank you for taking your time to help your neighbours

## Helpful contact numbers:

If you are worried that you or someone you know is at risk of abuse or neglect you can speak with:

- Age UK Advice Line (8am –7pm 7 days a week)  
0800 678 1174 [contact@ageuk.uk](mailto:contact@ageuk.uk)
- Adult Social Care at your local council
- Your GP or other NHS health providers
- The Silver Line 0800 4 70 80 (24 hours a day)
- The Police - You can call the local police on the 101 non-emergency number or call 999 immediately in an emergency.