

Safeguarding – Protecting yourself and the people you are helping

Even at times of crisis, it is still important we make sure we are all protected from abuse, fraud, theft and people who sadly may be taking advantage of the C-19 situation to offer themselves as a volunteer.

Virtual Activity

For any activities involving a ‘virtual’ interaction’ with a potentially vulnerable person– such as shopping, delivering and picking up prescriptions – it is still important that those volunteers are as safe as they can be. There may be issues about monies being exchanged, and identifying concerns about a person who needs a service, and ensuring that people are trustworthy with money and goods.

Working with Vulnerable People

The advice for volunteers who are carrying out activities for vulnerable people is that – where possible - they should have a current (within the last 3 years) Disclosure and Barring Service check (DBS) and preferably training and support in identifying and responding to any concerns around safeguarding.

Please see the following link about volunteer activities and safeguarding from the government: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-factsheet-community-volunteers-during-covid-19-outbreak/safeguarding-and-dbs-factsheet-faqs>

Vulnerable people are classified as those who may be receiving a service from their Local Authority and include

- People who have physical and learning disabilities
- People who are elderly
- Those suffering from mental health issues – this may have increased at this time, and will continue to be concern
- Those whose current circumstances mean they need additional support such as refugees, those in women’s refuges, etc
- Those suffering from a physical illness and are unwell. Again, this may increase at this point in time

Children are those under the age of 18, and any contact with children requires a DBS check.

DBS Check

It may be possible to have someone DBS checked quickly if you have a clear justification for a ‘volunteer in a community activity’. Please see the following link about DBS checks at this time from the Disclosure and Barring Service:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-a-statement-from-our-chief-executive-eric-robinson>

Good practice

1. Identification

All volunteers should have clear identification with them to demonstrate who they are volunteering with. This may be to show someone through a window, or show a pharmacist or anyone else who need to know the role of a volunteer.

2. Money

- Activities involving money should ideally be 2 people together if that is safe and they are both operating a safe distance from each other if from a different household.
- There is either a clear arrangement about money being left safely outside a property for a volunteer to collect, or a small float should be provided to the volunteer by the Church for buying food etc
- There should be a record of expenditure – either through a photo of the receipt or another means and this is held in records. The original receipt is returned to the individual and the payment is made from the individual to the Church if this is possible.

3. Vulnerable people

If there are safeguarding concerns identified about vulnerable people and children, these need to be immediately reported to the person with responsibility within the Church and passed to the Local Authority.