Group volunteering protocol during Covid-19 Restrictions 2020

Updated 28th July 2020 (during Covid-19 restrictions)

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- **high temperature** – this means you feel hot to touch on your chest or back (you do not need to measure your temperature)
- **new, continuous cough** – this means coughing a lot for more than an hour, or 3 or more coughing episodes in 24 hours (if you usually have a cough, it may be worse than usual)
- **loss or change to your sense of smell or taste** – this means you've noticed you cannot smell or taste anything, or things smell or taste different to normal

Most people with coronavirus have at least one of these symptoms https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/symptoms/

Self-Isolation

Staying at home if you have symptoms (self-isolation)

If your symptoms are mild, NHS 111 will usually advise you and anyone you live with not to leave your home. This is called self-isolation.

- Anyone with symptoms should self-isolate for 7 days from when their symptoms started.
- Anyone who does not have symptoms should self-isolate for 14 days from when the first person in your home started having symptoms.

Groups volunteering in Parks, green spaces and Public rights of way

PLEASE NOTE: Before volunteering each volunteer must read and understand the Group volunteering protocol and Covid Risk Assessment (see below).

In order for volunteers to be covered by the Council's insurance, each volunteer must confirm they have read and understood this to the Chair of the group, project leader or the Community Spaces team at communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk with your name and the Friends group you belong to. This can be done for example via email in writing, or ticking a check box on Eventbrite booking form.

If you're not happy about leading a volunteer group, there is no pressure. Please put your own safety first. This is our guidance to support those who are able and wish to run sessions. It does not imply any expectation for you to do so.

It is a natural human instinct to move close to people to talk and interact. When concentrating on a task this often happens automatically without conscious awareness and will result in the raising of risk of coronavirus transmission. For this reason the group supervisory role is of particularly high importance when volunteering at this time and should be prioritised over other tasks

We know that time spent outdoors in our public open spaces is vital to good mental and physical health. During the Coronavirus lockdown, we were limited to the amount of time spent and activities undertaken in parks to daily exercise only.

Whilst the controls were entirely necessary in order to curb the spread of the virus, the latest Government advice now recommends that parks and green spaces are used as often as an individual wishes. People can now spend time outdoors, including private gardens and other outdoor spaces, in groups of up to six people from different households (from 1st June 2020), following social distancing guidelines, particularly ensuring you are two metres away from anyone outside your household. This relaxation of the measures offers a chance to look at how volunteers may now work in small groups provided they do so safely.

We will continue to review and update protocol based on data / Government guidance provided and amend our protocol and risk assessments as appropriate.

Planning your Group work party session

Volunteers over 70 years

Volunteers over the age of 70 and in the clinically vulnerable category can now resume working with other members of their Friends Group.

- People in these groups must be able to work in a distinct area from others to ensure social distancing is maintained at all times
- People in these groups must also not be responsible for handing out, collecting in or cleaning equipment for the group
- Volunteers must continue to confirm that they are **not** in the clinically extremely vulnerable group prior to volunteering
- Social distancing of 2m is still in place for everyone and all other measures remain the same (max 6 people, avoid sharing tools, do not provide refreshments)

We are still **not** able to allow people to volunteer in parks and green spaces if they are in the clinically extremely vulnerable category – see Government guidance here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19

How many people are allowed?

- 6 people including the session leader
- If the site is large and not busy, more than one group can be organised to run at the same time but they must be entirely independent of each other
- You will need at least one H&S / first aid volunteer within each group of 6
- Anyone not in the clinically extremely vulnerable category. Anyone in the vulnerable or over 70 category should take extra care to maintain social distancing, work in a distinct area away from others and not be responsible for handing out tools or collecting equipment in.

Before Group Sessions

- Session leader(s) and volunteers should be happy and willing to participate. Leaders are under no pressure to lead the activity if they are not comfortable. The mental health and wellbeing of all volunteers is paramount
- Publicise session with clear info that there are careful measures in place to adhere to latest Covid-19 guidance from the government, eg social distancing and safe use of tools
- Make clear if volunteers are showing coronavirus symptoms or are within the self-isolation category they must not attend. Issue Covid-19 risk assessment to volunteers prior to activity
- Have a pre session sign-up process to limit numbers (consider using Eventbrite or sheet from previous session)
- Have all PPE and tools ready: team leaders should ensure that tools should be freshly disinfected, especially on handles / main contact areas
- Consider cordoning off area volunteers will work, in order to keep the passing public well away from volunteers.

During Sessions – social distancing (2m) to be maintained at all times

A Session Leader should be assigned for all group sessions before the session commences

The Session Leader's role is to supervise and maintain social distancing throughout the groups alongside the normal H&S responsibilities

The Session Leader focus will be on making sure everyone is working safely, in line with the guidance. They should not be as involved in the task as usual as the first priority is ensuring safety

The Session Leader should give a thorough H&S briefing and tools talk at the start of the session to remind volunteers of social distancing and measures in place to protect each other, as well as the session plan. Point out to the group if any volunteers are from the same household and therefore able to work together.

- Introduction (toolbox talk) to highlight this protocol as well as other H&S measures for the session as well as the session plan / process. Go through Covid-19 and task risk assessments.
- Have a sign in process that maintains the 2m distancing and in which attendees are asked if they are showing symptoms or within the self-isolation category. If they are, politely ask them to leave the session and return home.
- Only up to 6 people per session including the leader to ensure appropriate supervision and support.
- Assign gardening gloves to each individual that they keep and don't return.
- Assign a set of tools for each person, not to be shared. Tools could be marked to help with ease of identification. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own tools, though these would need to be visually checked by group leader for defects. Provide bags for each volunteer to enable them to carry small hand tools safely.
- Ensure tasks are selected to be achievable within view of the supervisor and at a minimum of 2m from each other.
- Tools disinfected at end of session, especially on handles / main contact areas.

Engaging with the public

- People may approach the group – be ready to politely remind them to maintain at least 2m distance
- Consider having a Hi-Viz jacket for the designated leader to encourage members of the public with questions to only approach you.

Accidents and first aid

- Fully charged mobile phone in case of emergencies (be aware of signal black spots)
- First aiders to be aware of the information from the Resuscitation Council (UK).

https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/

Refreshments

- Please do not provide refreshments for the group. Volunteers should bring their own drink and food, to avoid sharing. This should be made clear to all participants before the day.
- If you need a bottle of water, use hand sanitiser before and after drinking (Bring your own hand sanitiser - for supplies see PPE below).
- Recommend others not to bring food unless essential. If they do, remind them to wash or sanitise hands before and after eating.

Recommended PPE List

- 1 set of gardening gloves per person + spares – please take care when taking gloves off (pull off inside out). Avoid touching your face. Volunteers should wash their own gloves, or leave for 72 hours
- If you are using disposable gloves this link provides additional help which may be of help:
- https://www.globus.co.uk/assets/files/How-To-Safely-Remove-Your-Disposable-Gloves-A4-0615.pdf Soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser – recommend volunteers to bring their own.

Stocks of PPE are available from the Council. Please email communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk or for Public Rights of Way volunteers please email rightsofway@southglos.gov.uk

Best practice:

Lone working – same basis as pre-Covid-19 – it is not ideal to separate any member of the group. If any volunteer has always has done lone tasks, i.e. litter picking, then make them aware of extra precautions of distancing including not doing it if area is too busy. Must report back at end of session to leader.

Tea breaks – There should be no formal break, where volunteers gather in one place. Volunteers should bring their own food and ensure they have plenty of fluids. There should be no sharing of food and drinks.

Timings of sessions – Consider running volunteer sessions at times when parks and open spaces are quiet.

Friends groups that have a large number of active members – To ensure Covid-19 guidelines are met groups should be restricted to 5 members plus the leader per session.

- Consider creating a weekly / monthly rota to ensure all members are included.
- For larger groups, you may split into more than one work party, but these additional teams must be working in separate areas, with their own tool supplies and have a competent leader in each team.
- Day long tasks can be split into two sessions (morning and afternoon with no cross over), only if tools are not shared and leaders are happy to run sessions on this basis.

Volunteers showing symptoms of Covid-19

If someone comes down with symptoms after taking part in a session, please ask them to book a Covid-19 test and inform the volunteer group lead.

If advised that a volunteer has developed Covid-19 and were recently at one of the volunteer activities, the volunteer lead for the activity should contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them through “Test and Trace” and take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken.

If you have any questions or concerns about volunteering or PPE, please get in touch with the Community Spaces team. Email: communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk

Group volunteering risk assessment during Covid-19 Restrictions 2020

Updated 28th July 2020 (during Covid-19 restrictions)

DISCLAIMER: *This risk assessment is to be used as a guidance document to inform any volunteer work that may be carried out during the outbreak of Covid-19. Currently, as of 6th July 2020, going by government guidelines,* ***volunteering must not take place in groups of more than 6 people from different households, socially distanced****. Two different households can meet in an unlimited number outdoors (e.g. two families of 6 could meet but not with any others). As a volunteer/volunteer group, please read and review the below and adjust to your needs to help keep you safe whilst volunteering during the Covid-19 outbreak. This should go hand in hand with your usual volunteering risk assessment and guidance, as supplementary information that is regularly checked by the group leader and on-hand if volunteers wish to see it. Those in the clinically extremely vulnerable category should not be taking part in group volunteering in public open spaces.*

PLEASE NOTE: Before volunteering you must read and understand the Group protocol and Covid Risk Assessment. You must confirm you have done so in writing (via email) to the Chair of the group or project leader in order for you to be covered by the Council's insurance policy. Thank you for your continued support.

Covid-19 Risk Assessment

Activity	Volunteers and community groups attending &/or carrying out activities on SG sites and PROWs during Covid-19 outbreak		
Service Directorate	Streetcare		
Department	Environment and Community Services		
Assessed By	John Morris / Richard Aston		
Assessment Date	28/07/2020	**Date Review Due**	Live

Likelihood x Severity = Risk Rating		SEVERITY			
		1 Negligible injury No lost time	**2 Minor injury Lost time <7 days**	**3 Major injury Lost time >7 days and <3 months**	**4 Severe or fatal injury >3 months lost time**
LIKELIHOOD	**1 Rare**	1	2	3	4
	2 Unlikely	2	4	6	8
	3 Likely	3	6	9	12
	4 Certain	4	8	12	16

RISK RATING (Likelihood x Severity = Risk Rating)		
1 – 2	Low	No further action necessary. Controls to be monitored to ensure that they remain suitable.
3 – 4	Medium	If likelihood is likely or certain, identify and implement further controls as soon as is practicable. In all cases controls to be monitored to ensure that they remain suitable.
6 – 9	High	If likelihood is likely or certain, identify and implement further controls without delay. In all cases controls to be monitored to ensure that they remain suitable.
12 - 16	Extreme	Activity must not proceed until further controls have been identified and implemented, to reduce risk rating to an acceptable level.

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Volunteer showing symptoms of Covid-19 Symptoms are: • High temp or fever, and/ or • New continuous cough • loss or change to your sense of smell or taste	Any volunteer taking part in or associated with volunteering activities.	If anyone is unwell with a recognised Covid-19 symptom they are told strictly not to volunteer. If symptoms are seen whilst volunteering then the volunteer will be sent home and advised to follow the stay at home guidance. If advised that a volunteer has developed Covid-19 and were recently at one of the volunteer activities, the volunteer lead for the activity should contact the Public Health Authority to discuss the case, identify people who have been in contact with them through "Test and Trace" and take advice on any actions or precautions that should be taken. https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Does the volunteer live with a person who has symptoms?	Any volunteer taking part in or associated with volunteering activities.	14 day isolation or if they develop symptoms. They can return to work if well on the 8th day after the onset of symptoms. Restrict contact with others If the volunteer develops symptoms during this time, 7 days' isolation from onset of symptoms. Isolation is about protecting the person minimising the spread of the virus. This is the highest level of advice treat as a 'must' not a 'should'. They are to be told do not volunteer	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Has the volunteer been in close contact (e.g living in the same household) in the past 14 days with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19).	Any volunteer taking part in or associated with volunteering activities.	14 day isolation or 7 day isolation from onset of symptoms. Restrict contact with others If the volunteer develops symptoms during this time, 7 days' isolation from onset of symptoms. Isolation is about protecting the person minimising the spread of the virus. This is the highest level of advice treat as a 'must' not a 'should'. They are to be told do not volunteer.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Has the volunteer been in contact with a person who has tested positive for Covid-19 and the volunteer is now showing symptoms?		7 day isolation from onset of symptoms Restrict contact with others Phone 111 if symptoms have not improved after 7days Isolation is about protecting the person minimising the spread of the virus. This is the highest level of advice treat as a 'must' not a 'should'. They are to be told do not volunteer.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Anyone in the **clinically extremely vulnerable** category	Anyone in the **clinically extremely vulnerable** category	Volunteers in the **clinically extremely vulnerable** category should not volunteer during the Covid-19 outbreak. They are recommended to stay at home. Volunteers leads should request volunteers to disclose prior to attending if they are in this group. If a volunteer discloses this on site they should be asked to go home. Our insurance cannot currently cover these individuals.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Volunteers who are pregnant		Pregnant volunteers are to be treated as being in the clinically vulnerable group. See section 7. They are to be told do not volunteer.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Volunteers who are over 70 or clinically vulnerable	Any volunteers who are over 70 years of age or clinically vulnerable	Volunteers in these groups are able to volunteer provided they maintain at least 2m distance from others at all times. They must not be responsible for handing out tools, cleaning equipment or working on any task that requires two people. They must take extra care to be extra vigilant and not to work too close to others. Other volunteers must be made aware of this to ensure extra care is taken to maintain 2m at all times.	2	4	8	Roles for volunteers in these groups should be planned in advance of the session	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Spread of Covid- 19 (Coronavirus) Personal Hygiene Transfer of virus through poor personal hygiene.	Volunteers, staff involved in or leading and members of the public passing by any activities.	Hand sanitiser gel should be available for volunteers where washing facilities are not readily available. Ideally access to hand washing facilities with soap and hot water in place. Access to paper towels for drying of hands. Safety talk at the beginning of activity.	2	4	8	Volunteers reminded regularly to use hand sanitiser/wash their hands for 20 seconds with warm water and soap and the importance of proper drying. Where warm water is not available, cold water can be used. Reminded to catch coughs and sneezes in tissues – follow Catch it, Bin it, Kill it and avoid touching face, eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands. Where possible posters displaying handwashing reminder/guidance.	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity.

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Contamination - Transfer of virus from multiple people touching and moving items. This could then be transferred to other surfaces or to the face.	Any volunteer, staff member or member of public who may touch the same surfaces.	Individuals observing social distancing guidelines where possible, practice good hand hygiene behaviour's and wear gloves as required. Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly before and as soon as possible after the activity	2	4	8	Ongoing visual monitoring to ensure volunteers are observing social distancing. Wearing of gloves - Volunteers advised to wear gloves when moving/touching items which could be used by a member of the public, or using any tools/equipment to prevent cuts. Group size must not exceed 6.	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity.
Individuals not being continually aware of the 2m social distancing guidance	Any volunteer, staff or member of public	Volunteers made aware of social distancing guidelines – https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july Advise back-to-back or side-side working, rather than face-to-face, where possible.	2	4	8	Ongoing volunteer visual monitoring to ensure social distancing is being adhered to by volunteers. Trying to reduce the amount of volunteers in any one area. Where the social distancing guidelines cannot be followed in full, in relation to a particular activity, volunteer leads should stop the activity	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity.

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Shared tools during activities.	Any volunteers taking part in activities.	Volunteers are asked not to share tools. Gloves are not shared between volunteers and are not taken back at the end of a session. Volunteers advised to wash their gloves after attending an activity, or leave for 72hours.	2	4	8	Volunteers are to identify which tools they will require for the length of the activity and collect these at the beginning of the session; they will be told they must not share these tools with others. Volunteer leads should wipe down any tools and equipment after each activity with anti-bacterial sprays. Anti-bacterial sprays, effective of killing the Covid 19 virus, should be on hand to clean any tools throughout the activity. If anti-bacterial sprays are not available tools should be cleaned with soap and water or put out of use for at least 72 hours before next use.	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity.
Correct use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	Any volunteers using/wearing PPE. Anyone accompanying.	For outdoor volunteer activities, PPE does not include face coverings. If a volunteer chooses to wear a face covering, this should not be in place of following social distancing. Gloves should be given to volunteers at the start of any activity for them to keep. They should be used by volunteers if they are required to touch surfaces which may be used by members of the public or other volunteers.	2	4	8	Face coverings are not required when risk is managed through social distancing (e.g. maintaining a distance of 2 metres) in an outdoor space. Volunteer activities should be planned in a way which does not require people from different households to come into contact closer than 2m.	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity.
First Aid	First Aiders and anyone they are practicing First Aid.	First aiders to be aware of the information from the Resuscitation Council (UK). In an emergency, the need for resuscitation by a First Aider overrides the risk posed by not maintaining the 2m social distancing rules. https://www.resus.org.uk/media/statements/resuscitation-council-uk-statements-on-covid-19-coronavirus-cpr-and-resuscitation/covid-community/	2	4	8	Volunteers carry out personal inspection for minor cuts and grazes and make sure these are cleaned	Once activities begin.	First Aider for each activity and volunteers

Hazard	Who might be harmed?	Existing control measures	Risk rating L x S = R			What other controls are needed?	By when?	Person responsible
			L	S	R			
Aggressive members of the public who are not social distancing	Any volunteers taking part in activities.	Volunteers asked to interact with the public in a considered and polite manner. If members of the public remain aggressive or threatening in any way, the volunteer activity should stop and volunteers should leave the site and contact the Police and the Community Spaces team.	3	1	3		Whilst activities are occurring	Volunteer lead for each activity.
Busy sites	Any volunteers taking part in activities and SGC staff.	Busy locations should be avoided if possible, using a dynamic risk assessment approach. Activities to be kept to a minimum time.	3	2	6	If site areas are or become too busy to maintain social distancing then the volunteer lead should assess the situation and change, move, cancel or stop the activity. Volunteers should respect social distancing measures to protect themselves and SGC staff, refraining from approaching a member of staff unless essential.	Whilst activities are occurring	Volunteer lead for each activity.
Collection of green waste/litter bags (risk of handling contaminated surfaces)	Volunteers and SGC grounds / cleansing staff	Volunteers should only generate waste if they have agreed in advance with Street cleansing that a collection will be possible. Activities which do not result in waste collections being required are to be prioritised, to avoid unnecessary staff contact with volunteers and given the additional strain the SGC Streetcare staff are currently under. Report any hazardous items found on sites to the Council – hazardous waste is not to be touched by any volunteers. Contact: streetcleansing@southglos.gov.uk	2	4	8	If waste is to be collected, volunteers should take extra precautions to seal and leave in the agreed place. Handle waste with care, minimising unnecessary contact. Wear gloves and ensure hands are washed afterwards. Be especially careful not to touch outer surface of gloves when removing them.	Before activity takes place	Volunteer lead for activity