Group volunteering protocol during COVID-19 Restrictions 2021

Updated 17TH March 2021 (during COVID-19 restrictions)

STEP 1A & 2

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

Approximately 1 in 3 people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and could be spreading it without realising it.

Find more information

https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-COVID-19/

If you have symptoms

- **Arrange a test** to check if you have coronavirus as soon as possible https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test
- **Self- isolate at home** and do not have visitors until you receive your test result. Only leave home to have a test
- **Anyone you live with** or in your support bubble must also isolate until you get your result

If you are contacted by Test and Trace

- **Follow the instructions** given by them on isolation and testing
- **Give the contact details** of the relevant person in your group who can provide contact information for other volunteers who may be affected

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-19 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. 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, in public open spaces, in groups of up to six people from different households (from 2nd December 2020), following social distancing guidelines, particularly ensuring you are two metres away from anyone outside your household.

STEP 1A & 2

From 8th March 2021 England entered a Roadmap process of gradually reducing restrictions. This Protocol and Risk Assessment aligns with the government-determined Roadmap Step level and is only valid when used during the correct Step.

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

STEP 1A (29th March) & STEP 2 (TBC no sooner than 12th April)

Summary:

- **Up to 6 people may volunteer in public outdoor spaces**
- **Up to 6 people may meet in a private garden eg for planning or tool maintenance**
- **One person at a time in tools stores or enclosed spaces, unless from the same household or support bubble**

Planning your Group work party session

Plan work remotely wherever possible (eg by email, telephone or online meeting) and ensure the planned work is within the Management Plan or other plan of work agreed with the Council.

Ensure all volunteers have read the Group and Individual Risk Assessments in advance and confirmed their understanding.

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.
- 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.

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 with their own session leader
- You will need at least one H&S / first aid volunteer within each group of 6

Volunteers over 60 years or clinically vulnerable

Volunteers over the age of 60 and in the clinically vulnerable category are at higher risk from severe symptoms if they contract COVID-19. However the majority of this group have now been offered vaccinations.

- Volunteers over 60 may volunteer but should be particularly vigilant to follow precautions
- Volunteers over 70 or clinically vulnerable may return to volunteering as normal once they have received both vaccinations, if they feel safe to do so.
- 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)

Clinically extremely vulnerable volunteers

We are still **not** able to allow people to volunteer in parks and green spaces if they are in the clinically extremely vulnerable category as the government guidance currently recommends continuing to shield even after receiving vaccination – 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

Insurance

Volunteers must be part of a group with a current SGC volunteer agreement in place or be a member of a group with their own appropriate insurance.

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 marking off your work area with stakes and rope/high-visibility tape to reduce risk of encroachment by the public
- 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)
- Individual volunteers should have basic provisions such as wound-cleaning wipes, plasters in their personal First Aid Kit (as per the Individual Protocol and Risk Assessment)
- 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, and there should be no sharing except by those from the same household. 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.
- There should be no formal break, where volunteers gather in one place.

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
  Please ensure you dispose of single use gloves safely and appropriately either on-site or by bagging them up and taking them home for safe disposal.
- Soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitiser – recommend volunteers to bring their own.
- Disinfectant sprays and/or anti-viral wipes for tools.
- At least the lead volunteer should wear hi-vis clothing

We also recommend volunteers carry a face covering with them in case any issues arise where social distancing cannot be maintained. Guidance on face coverings can be found here https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own

If you require us to provide you with PPE (gloves, hand sanitiser and disinfectant sprays for tools), please get in touch with the Community Spaces Place team at communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk or for Public Rights of Way volunteers please email rightsofway@southglos.gov.uk.

Lone working

The same principle apply 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. A template Lone Working Policy has been provided to help you identify what can and cannot be done safely at your site by lone volunteers.

Work when few other people are there

- Only plan volunteer sessions at times when you expect the park or open space to be quiet. Or plan to work in areas away from main paths and popular areas.
- If you find it is busier than expected and cannot proceed without adhering to social distancing, come back at another time.
- Parks and Open Spaces may become unexpectedly busy so be prepared to make safe and cut your session short if needed.

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 sites where there are tasks in separate areas, you may arrange more than one work party. These additional teams must be working completely independently, with their own tool supplies and have a competent leader in each team. Work Planning must be done in advance with no face to face interaction between the two groups on site.
- 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.

Face coverings

- Not required for outdoor working but may become necessary if social distancing cannot be maintained. You should not plan for work which would require masks to be used.
- Required if working in an indoor or enclosed space (including tool stores)

Tool stores and confined spaces – these pose a higher risk of transmission and should ideally be entered by one person at a time and face coverings should be worn. Short tasks can be done by more than one person if both are using face coverings.

Collection of Waste

Contact streetcleansing@southglos.gov.uk and where possible provide 2 days' notice prior to your activity to ensure any waste collected can be removed on the day of your volunteering activity. Please consider where you leave bags to ensure collection vehicles can stop / park safely when removing waste.

Monitoring

Please record your hours / location worked so we can help ensure volunteers are working safely. We will contact all volunteers to collect feedback data covering number of hours worked / locations / any issues or concerns recorded on a regular basis (monthly).

If you are showing coronavirus symptoms (listed at the top of this document) or are under a period of self-isolation please do not take part in volunteer activities.

Reporting incidents

Any incidents on site should continue to be reported to the relevant Council team as soon as possible after the session as under normal procedures. Email addresses communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk or rightsofway@southglos.gov.uk

Including but not limited to:

- Accidents on site involving volunteers
- Accidents on site involving members of the public relating to volunteer activities
- Damage to paths, trees, equipment etc
- If a volunteer tests positive for COVID-19 after attending a session or if you have been contacted by Test and Trace regarding a volunteer who has attended a recent session (**DO NOT give the name of the individual**)

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

Volunteers developing symptoms of COVID-19

If someone comes down with symptoms after taking part in a session:

- advise them to self-isolate and book a COVID-19 test https://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test
- inform the volunteer group lead or key contact (usually the Secretary) and ensure they have the list of participants for sessions which the volunteer attended in the 48 hours before their symptoms started
- Advise the volunteer to direct queries about contacts from NHS Test and Trace to the volunteer group lead
- **DO NOT** pass this information on to other volunteers as this would be a breach of data protection

If a volunteer **tests positive** after taking part in a session:

- Ensure you have contact details for all volunteers in a work party with the individual in the 48 hours before their symptoms began (or positive test if did not show symptoms)
- If contacted by NHS Test and Trace provide those names and contact details
- Inform the affected volunteers that someone has tested positive, that they may be contacted by Test and Trace and recommend that they self isolate.
- Inform Community Space Team by email that you have had a positive volunteer test and the date of the last session they attended
- **DO NOT** give out or confirm the name of the affected volunteer as this would be a breach of data protection.

For more information on the Test and Trace process please visit the website NHS Test and Trace: how it works - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

STEP 1A & 2

Group volunteering risk assessment during COVID-19 Restrictions 2021

Updated 17th March 2021 (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.* ***During Roadmap Steps 1A and 2, volunteering must not take place in groups of more than 6 people from different households, socially distanced****. 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.*

NB Tier-specific entries in the Risk assessment are highlighted in the table

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	Elinor Kershaw / Richard Aston		
Assessment Date	17/03/2021	**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, go online to book a free NHS test immediately to check if you have coronavirus or call 119 if you have no internet access. If advised that a volunteer has confirmed COVID-19 and were recently at one of the volunteer activities, the volunteer lead for the activity should prepare to assist "Test and Trace" https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/ and inform Community Spaces by email at communityspaces@southglos.gov.uk	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Does the volunteer live with or in a support bubble with a person who has symptoms or has tested positive? Or has been contacted by Test and Trace and advised to self-isolate?	Any volunteer taking part in or associated with volunteering activities.	**They are to be told not to volunteer.** The volunteer should isolate for ***at least*** 10 days, restricting their contact with others, whilst the symptomatic person they live with gets a test. If the volunteer develops symptoms during this time, they must self-isolate for ***at least*** 10 days from the onset of symptoms and get a test. Isolation is about protecting the person and minimising the spread of the virus. This is the highest level of advice treat as a 'must' not a 'should'. When to self-isolate and what to do - Coronavirus (COVID-19) - NHS (www.nhs.uk)	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Anyone in the **clinically extremely**	Anyone in the **clinically extremely vulnerable**	Volunteers in the **clinically extremely vulnerable** category should not volunteer during the COVID-19 outbreak. They are recommended to stay at home.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as

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			
vulnerable category	category	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.						individual volunteers.
Volunteers who are over 60	Any volunteers who are over 60 years of age	Volunteers in this group are able to volunteer as normal but should be particularly careful to follow guidance.	2	4	8	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
Volunteers who are over 70 or clinically vulnerable (including those who are pregnant)	Any volunteers who are over 70 years of age or clinically vulnerable	Volunteers in these groups are able to volunteer provided they have received both doses of vaccine. They should continue to be particularly careful to follow the guidance.	2	5	10	N/A	N/A	Lead volunteer as well as individual volunteers.
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. Socially distanced 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. Where neither of these are available, an appropriate alcohol-based sanitiser should 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, and 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			
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/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing/coronavirus-covid-19-meeting-with-others-safely-social-distancing 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. Work only in areas which do not obstruct paths to less than 2m passing space. 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.
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 oversee wipe down of any tools and equipment after each activity with	Once activities begin.	Volunteer lead for each activity, and 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			
						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 volunteers working together change activities during the session, tools must be cleaned before transferring to another volunteer.		
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, and individual volunteers
Work in enclosed spaces	Any volunteers taking part in activities.	One person at a time in any indoor spaces (including tool stores) and enclosed spaces on relevant sites, unless from the same household or support bubble.	2	4	8			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	Report any issues to Community Spaces after the activity so this can be monitored and escalated if it becomes an area of high risk.	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