

**COVID 19 ADVICE FOR VOLUNTEERS**

Please note this is an evolving situation and the advice may change based on the latest published Government Guidance which can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Section 1: Volunteers who are feeling unwell – self isolation requirements

Section 2: Stay at home guidance for volunteers who are living in a household with an individual who has possible coronavirus infection (who is self-isolating)

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1. **Volunteers who are feeling unwell**

Symptoms of COVID-19 include:

* a new continuous cough (with or without sputum)
* fever (>37.8 C)
* loss of taste or smell
* nasal discharge and congestion
* difficulty breathing – wheezing, shortness of breath
* hoarseness
* sore throat
* sneezing
* flu like symptoms e.g. malaise, body ache
* diarrhoea

If a volunteer develops any of these symptoms whilst volunteering, they must:

* Immediately self-isolate away from patients and colleagues
* Inform their local line manager and the voluntary services team
* Return home wearing a surgical mask and adhering to strict distancing measures

**If symptoms require medical advice the volunteer should use the NHS111 online service or call NHS111 and seek appropriate medical help. In an emergency call 999.**

If a volunteer develops any of these symptoms whilst at home, they must:

* Self-isolate at home
* Inform their local line manager and the Voluntary Services team
* You are strongly advised to request a COVID 19 test via the website: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested> which is available for people volunteering in a health care setting. Testing must take place between day 1 and 7 of becoming symptomatic. The outcome of the swab test will determine if the volunteer can return (see Guidance for Interpreting Test Results)
* If symptoms persist or worsen after 2 weeks the volunteer must seek further advice by using **the NHS111 online service or call NHS111 and seek appropriate medical review. In an emergency call 999.**

**Self-isolation at home:** this means staying at home and not going to work, volunteering, attending education facilities or public areas.

You should:

* Avoid using public transport during the 7 day isolation period
* Avoid having visitors to your home
* Ask friends, family or delivery drivers to drop off food and/or carry out errands on your behalf but not enter the house unnecessarily

1. **Stay at home guidance for volunteers who are living in a household with an individual who has possible COVID 19 infection (who is self-isolating).**

If a volunteer is living in a household with anyone who is displaying symptoms of COVID-19 (see section 1) the volunteer must go into self-isolation along with the rest of the household.

The household member may be eligible for a COVID 19 test via:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-getting-tested>

Testing must take place between day 1 and day 7 of the household member becoming symptomatic.

If the household member is tested, the outcome of the household member’s swab test will determine when the volunteer can return to volunteering (see Guidance for Interpreting Test Results)

1. **Guidance for Interpreting Test Results**

If you or a member of your household are tested via the Government COVID 19 Testing Scheme, you will receive the outcome of your result. You are advised to share this with the manager in the area you volunteer and with the Voluntary Services Team.

Please note that the result of COVID-19 screening is valid **ONLY** if the sample was taken between day 1 and 7 (inclusive of day 1 and day 7) of the volunteer or household member becoming symptomatic. If the sample was taken later than day 7 the result **MUST NOT** be used to make a return to volunteering decision and the volunteer should follow the advice based on symptoms only.

**Negative Result**

If you were the person tested you will be able to return to volunteering as long as you feel well enough.

If it was a member of your household that tested negative you will be able to resume volunteering straight away.

**Positive Result**

If you were the person tested **you must remain isolated for the full 7 days** and only return to volunteering on day 8 from onset of symptoms, if feeling well enough and you have not had a high temperature for at least two days.

If it was a member of your household who has tested positive **you must remain in isolation for the full 14 days** from the onset of their symptoms.

**Currently it is unknown how long any immunity to COVID-19 might last. If you or a member of your household become unwell again you should self-isolate and may need to be tested again.**

1. **Ending self-isolation and returning to volunteering**

**If you were the person** with the symptoms and were unable to access testing you can return to volunteering on **day 8** after the onset of symptoms, if you are feeling better and have been free from a fever for 2 days. If a cough is the only persistent symptom on day 8, you can still return to volunteering as the post-viral cough is known to persist for several weeks in some cases.

**If your household member** was the person with the symptoms and was unable to access testing you must stay at home and self-isolate for the **full 14 days.** This also applies to other household members.

**The 14-day period starts from the day when the first person in the house became ill.** You can return to volunteering once the 14 day period of isolation is completed if you remain well. If you develop symptoms during the 14 day period you will then have to self-isolate for 7 days (you also have the option to request a test - see Section 1).

This guidance **does not apply to a volunteer who has tested POSITIVE (Covid-19 screening test – Detected) and is volunteering in the Cancer Centre, Haematology/Oncology or with patients undergoing Solid Organ Transplant**.

Volunteers working in these areas must contact Voluntary Services to be provided with further guidance before returning to volunteering.

1. **Infection Control Measures including social distancing**

It is important that all of us adhere to infection prevention and control rules at all times. This now includes:

* Regularly washing hands with soap and water or using hand gel
* Observing social distancing of 2 metres where possible
* Wearing a face covering whilst using public transport
* Wearing a face covering when entering the hospital
* Adhering to the measures put in place for infection prevention in the physical environment you are volunteering in, especially in public areas e.g. corridors and lifts
* Wearing Personal Protective Equipment needed for your volunteer role which will be provided to you
* It is strongly recommended that when you return home after your volunteer shift you shower and wash your clothes and volunteer jacket (if you wear one) on a 60 degree wash cycle

This advice may change and you will be informed of any changes to guidance as soon as possible.

If you have any queries about this advice or the volunteer Covid 19 Self-assessment, please email [voluntaryservices@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:voluntaryservices@gstt.nhs.uk) or ring 020 7188 1658.

If you feel unsure, unsafe or not happy with any aspects of your volunteer role during this time please do contact us and we are here to support you: [voluntaryservices@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:voluntaryservices@gstt.nhs.uk) or ring 020 7188 1658.