

Supporting vulnerable people in your community during COVID-19 2/4/2020

Below are some guidelines for community volunteers who are working to keep people supplied with food and medicines, and give them social contact. We may all be anxious at the moment but the people you are aiming to help may also have particular needs if they are to feel comfortable accepting help from you.

These guidelines should be used in conjunction with the advice you've been given by the group or organisation you are working or volunteering with. If you have any queries or issues, talk to your contact person or volunteer team leader.

Manage contact with the person you are supporting

- Be reliable and consistent. This is key for ensuring people feel safe.
- Keep a 2 metre (6 feet) separation between yourself and the person answering the door.
- Don't enter the home for any reason. If someone needs immediate help, call 999.
- Don't wear a helmet or facemask when approaching someone's home.
- If you contact someone via the internet, call to make an appointment first so the person knows when you'll be contacting them online.

Respect people's needs

- Don't assume someone wants or needs your help - ask first and listen to what they want.
- Always try and fit in with someone's requirements; for example, someone may need you to text rather than ring the doorbell when you drop off their shopping.
- Keep people informed about other support options that may be available so that they can choose the best service for them and don't feel they can only come to you.

Manage boundaries and expectations

- Don't offer advice on things such as benefits or legal matters, even if you have experience with the issue someone raises: encourage the person to contact a local Advice Centre or Citizens Advice (see the numbers and websites below).
- Don't attempt to offer in-depth emotional support. To do this properly you need training. Instead refer adults to the Samaritans or Silverline and young people to Childline (see the numbers and websites below).
- People may want to give something back to say "thank you", but don't accept money or other gifts to you in person. Suggest they make a donation to your charity or contribute to a local COVID-19 appeal, such as those by [Above and Beyond](#) (for Bristol city centre hospitals), [Quartet Community Foundation](#), and [Southmead Hospital](#).

If you are worried that someone you are helping is in danger or is experiencing any form of abuse, you must report it. If you have a key contact at your group or organisation, tell them as soon as possible. If necessary, contact the police. Call 999 in an emergency or, if the person is not in immediate danger, call 101. You can also report suspected abuse to [Bristol City Council online](#).

Voscur is here to support VCSE organisations. For support, advice and guidance, please contact us: info@voscur.org 0117 909 9949

Useful expert contacts

<p>Legal advice (for example: employment, discrimination, EU Settled Status)</p>	<p>Bristol Law Centre</p> <p>https://www.bristolawcentre.org.uk/get-help/ 0117 924 8662</p>
<p>Benefits, debt and housing advice</p>	<p>Bristol CAB</p> <p>https://www.bristolcab.org.uk/get-advice 03444 111444</p>
	<p>North Bristol Advice</p> <p>http://www.northbristoladvice.org.uk 0117 951 5751</p>
	<p>St Paul's Advice Centre</p> <p>https://www.stpaulsAdvice.org.uk 0117 9552981</p>
	<p>South Bristol Advice Services</p> <p>https://www.southbristoladvice.org.uk 0117 985 1122</p>
<p>Emotional support</p>	<p>The Samaritans</p> <p>https://www.samaritans.org 116 123 (freephone)</p>
	<p>The Silverline (for older people)</p> <p>https://www.thesilverline.org.uk 0800 470 80 90</p>
	<p>Childline (for young people)</p> <p>https://www.childline.org.uk/ 0800 1111</p>