

COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

General Information

Keep your distance

It is important to keep 2 metres distance from others to reduce the possibility of spreading the virus. <https://www.nhsinform.scot/> is the go to website for up to date advice on coronavirus (COVID-19).

When you find a group you want to volunteer for, make sure you find out:

- who runs the group;
- what they're doing, where and why;
- their approach to health and safety;
- how they'll keep vulnerable children and adults safe; and
- who to speak to in an emergency or if you need help or advice.

You should:

- tell the organisers anything about yourself that could affect the volunteering work you can do, such as health issues;
- do your best to carry out the volunteering you say you'll do, if you can't keep an appointment, give the volunteer co-ordinator or the person you're visiting plenty of notice;
- follow the latest NHS safety guidelines for coronavirus (COVID-19); and
- tell your volunteer coordinator if you're worried about someone who you are helping or report it on 01851 600 501 or e-mail enquiries@cne-siar.gov.uk

It is important NOT to:

- say yes to more volunteer work than you can manage, you can always offer more support later;
- carry out volunteering activities that are illegal, dangerous or make you feel uncomfortable; and
- accept payment of any kind from someone you help while volunteering.

Stop volunteering if:

- you feel unwell, especially if you have symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19);
- you're asked to by a volunteering lead; and
- it is not safe to keep volunteering.

Make sure you tell the group if you decide to stop volunteering, so they know you're safe and can adjust their plans. You must tell your volunteering lead if you've stopped volunteering because you have had symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Eyes and Ears Open COVID-19 Campaign

Adult Protection

Safeguarding adults means protecting the most vulnerable from abuse and neglect. Abuse and neglect can happen in different ways and be carried out by anyone. If you see something, are told something or something doesn't feel right you need to report it.

To discuss or report a situation where someone may be being harmed or neglected telephone the Western Isles Council Offices on:

01851 822708 - Stornoway, Sandwick Road Office

01870 602425 - Balivanich Council Offices

Alternatively call the police on 101. If someone is in immediate danger call 999

Find out more at: <https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/social-care-and-health/community-care-and-criminal-justice/adult-support-and-protection/>

Child Protection

With the closure of schools and nurseries during the COVID-19 crisis, a national child protection group is urging everyone to keep their eyes and ears open for children who may be at risk during this time.

The Outer Hebrides Child Protection Committee recognises the impact a significant change in day-to-day life may have on vulnerable children.

“Schools and nurseries across the Western Isles play a central role in contributing to the safety of all local children, especially those who may be at risk of abuse and neglect. When children are not at school we lose the ability to monitor their wellbeing on a daily basis, and we are making every effort possible to support those children and families who may need it during these demanding times.”

However, The Comhairle stresses the need for the public to join efforts to protect potentially vulnerable children during the Coronavirus outbreak. Tam Baillie the Independent Chair of the Committee urges everyone to play a part to keep local children safe.

“The onus of care has now shifted from schools to local communities, and we're asking everyone to keep their eyes and ears open. Local people always provide a significant protective factor for children and that's even more important at a time when families may be under significant additional stress. If you're at all worried about a child's welfare, it's much better to say something than do nothing.”

The Comhairle urges everyone to take action if they're concerned about a child or children. If you're worried don't hesitate to contact social work on 01851 822749, or call the police on 101. If someone is in immediate danger, telephone 999.

Health and Safety

Food Handling

Environmental Health is aware that businesses and groups are trying to adapt to the COVID-19 crisis situation by preparing meals for takeaway and we would encourage you to alter your business' food safety management system to take account of this.

There is advice for all those handling food on the Comhairle website at:

<https://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/business/consumers-and-the-environment/food-safety-service/food-hygiene-advice-for-businesses/>

- routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces (e.g. door handles, tables),
- promoting hand hygiene by making sure that staff, contractors, service users and visitors have access to hand washing facilities and providing alcohol based hand rub in prominent places. Hand sanitiser gels can be used in addition to hand washing, but they only work on clean hands. **They should never be used as a substitute for hand washing when preparing or handling food.**
- Try to minimise direct hand contact with food by using tongs and utensils. Gloves can be used to minimise direct contact with food. However, gloves can become contaminated with bacteria in the same way as hands and are not a substitute for good personal hygiene and hand washing.
- ensuring any crockery and cutlery in shared kitchen areas is cleaned with warm general purpose detergent and dried thoroughly before being stored for re-use, and
- avoiding leaving food stuffs (e.g. crisps, open sandwiches) exposed and open for communal sharing unless individually wrapped.

If you have any queries, please contact Environmental Health on 01851 822 694 or e-mail at: eh@cne-siar.gov.uk

Hot Food

Where a hot meal is being provided additional processes should be implemented to minimise the potential spread of COVID-19. Examples of this include, providing wrapped cutlery, additional cleaning of touchpoints and no-contact deliveries (see below).

There is currently no evidence that food is a source of coronavirus (COVID-19) and it is very unlikely that it can be transmitted through the consumption of food. The main transmission route of the virus is assumed to be direct human to human contact.

Follow the latest national guidance at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/> - please check daily as guidance is constantly updated.

Food Standards Scotland has advice on their website, at:

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/consumers/food-safety/coronavirus>

Health Protection Scotland has issued information and guidance for non-healthcare settings, which would include all food premises. This can be found on their website, at: <https://www.hps.scot.nhs.uk/a-to-z-of-topics/wuhan-novel-coronavirus/>.

Personal Protection

Home Visits

Where Volunteers need to undertake home visits, washing hands effectively with soap and water is important in accordance with public health guidance. This should happen at least before and after each home visit takes place.

As much as possible during the visit, Volunteers should observe social distancing from other people in the home. Volunteers should take care to limit contact with household surfaces whilst in the home. Where possible, after washing hands Volunteers should use disposable paper towels to dry hands and place in a waste bin. Where there is no access to hand gel Volunteers may find it helpful to carry an alternative provision.

If a Volunteer has had contact with a member of the community who are a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, they should be vigilant for respiratory symptoms in themselves during the incubation period which can be up to 14 days and should not continue to volunteer if they have a fever or new and persistent cough. They should seek advice as guided by NHS Scotland. During this period, symptomatic volunteers should avoid contact with people in the wider community and self-isolation rules will apply.

Home Deliveries

COVID-19 has changed life for everyone, but some people in our community are among the hardest hit and need support with groceries and prescription deliveries. It is important that no-contact deliveries are adhered to wherever possible and do not car share with other volunteers.

No-Contact Deliveries

If you are shopping or collecting items for delivery to people who are self-isolating please adopt the following measures

- Follow the latest national guidance at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/> – please check daily as guidance is constantly updated.
- Do not car share with other volunteers
- Regularly wipe down the main touch points of your car (i.e. steering wheel, seat belts, door and boot handles)
- Practice social distancing – keeping 2 metres from other people including those self-isolating.
- Wash / sanitise hands for at least 20 seconds regularly
- Use new disposable bags for all shopping
- Keep all items in cleanable containers in your car boot as far as practicable and regularly sanitise any containers used – following the instructions on the label of the cleaning product, including contact times (ensure the cleaning product is capable of killing viruses)
- Leave bags on doorstep / porch of household knock / ring bell then step back 2m.