

# Getting you started as a Check in and Chat Volunteer

## Welcome and thank you!

Welcome to Royal Voluntary Service and thank you so much for choosing to be part of one of Britain's largest volunteer organisations.

Founded in 1938 as WVS, the charity mobilised over one million volunteers to help with almost every aspect of wartime life. Today, Royal Voluntary Service still inspires and enables people to give the gift of voluntary service to meet the needs of the day. Never has that been more important than now, when we find ourselves in frightening and challenging times with the impact of COVID-19.



**Catherine Johnstone CBE**  
Chief Executive, Royal Voluntary Service

As our founder said in 1938,

***‘As a nation we require voluntary service today as much as we have ever done in the past’.***

**This guide will help to keep you protected whilst you carry out your voluntary service with us.**

Please take the time to read and understand the content thoroughly so that we can help people effectively and safely.

At the end of this guide you will find fact sheets and important information to support you in your role.

Thank you for joining us, we hope that by coming together we can keep our communities safe and comforted during this difficult time.

Best wishes,

**Catherine Johnstone CBE**  
Chief Executive

## Let's start with some key information that will help protect you and the people you are supporting.

### DATA PROTECTION & CONFIDENTIALITY

During your volunteering you will come across personal and sensitive information about individuals as part of the support you will offer. We want to make sure that all information stays safe and confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 1998 and GDPR Regulations 2018. We want you to treat other people's personal information in the same way you would want yours to be treated. If you do acquire information about an individual you may be supporting (for example, names, addresses and possible medical information), we ask that you maintain confidentiality and do not discuss or disclose any data or information with anyone outside of Royal Voluntary Service or with anyone who doesn't need to know.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Keep any data secure and treat other people's information in the same way you would want yours to be treated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss any information or data with anyone outside of Royal Voluntary Service or with anyone who doesn't need to know.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If you think there has been a mistake or breach of data protection tell Royal Voluntary Service about it so we can manage this.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leave any messages on answerphones with any personal information if you are not sure who is going to be able to hear them.</li> </ul>

### With-holding your phone number

We recommend that you call the isolated person from a withheld number. To withhold your number on individual calls just dial 141 before the telephone number you want to call.

### EQUALITY

You will support a diverse range of individuals in diverse communities and we ask that you respect every individual's beliefs and that nobody is treated less favourably or excluded in anyway. We are all different and all have the right to be treated with dignity and respect. If you witness any behaviours where you feel someone is being treated less favourably or excluded, then you must inform Royal Voluntary Service of this immediately so we can tackle this and take appropriate action.

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat others the same way you would want to be treated.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Treat anyone less favourably or exclude anyone who we are supporting in our communities.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respect everyone regardless of who they are, their backgrounds and the communities that they live.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ignore any unacceptable behaviours towards anyone, and ensure that you report it to Royal Voluntary Service.</li> </ul>

## SAFEGUARDING

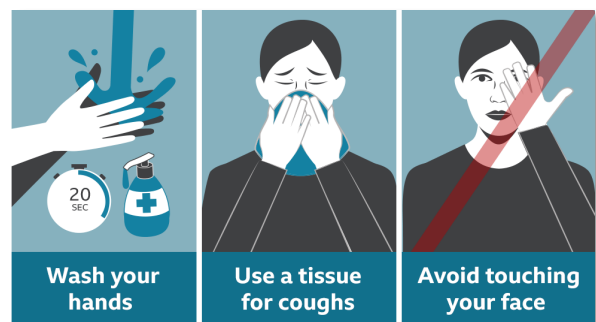
At Royal Voluntary Service we place the safeguarding and well-being of volunteers, employees and people we support above anything else. You may come across vulnerable adults or adults at risk of harm and they should never experience abuse of any kind. We want you to be alert to any signs or patterns of abuse or anything that may concern you and always raise your suspicions. Be assured you will always be supported by the charity and not raising your concerns is worse than raising a suspicion that is incorrect. If anyone tells you of any type of abuse then remain calm, listen and reassure them that it will be taken seriously. Don't promise confidentiality as you will need to speak to a limited number of people once you have this information and we ask that you ALWAYS report this to Royal Voluntary Service.

## KEEPING YOU SAFE

The support you will offer will mean you will be out in the community supporting the most vulnerable as we come together to support the needs of the day and help people to live well through the COVID-19 virus outbreak. We are committed to keeping you safe and below we have outlined some guidance to support you whilst supporting people.

### How to protect yourself – General Guidance

- ✓ Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap and water at regular intervals throughout the day.
- ✓ If running water and soap is not available then ensure you have alcohol-based hand wipes or sanitiser to kill viruses that may be on your hands.
- ✓ Avoid touching your face and keep hands away from eyes, mouth and nose to avoid spread of any virus.
- ✓ If you cough, use a tissue and dispose of the tissue immediately. If the cough becomes persistent then you should follow government self-isolation precautions. If no tissue is available, cough into your arm.
- ✓ Consider social distancing by maintaining at least 2 metres distance between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- ✓ If you feel unwell and have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical attention and follow NHS guidance whilst avoiding any contact with people.



### What should I do if I think I have COVID-19 Symptoms?

If you are concerned about your health in relation to Coronavirus and believe you have symptoms then you need to pause your voluntary service and self-isolate for the required period of time. Please check out the Public Health Guidance to identify how long you need to isolate for.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>

## OUR VOLUNTEERING AGREEMENT

We want to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable, rewarding and safe. The below outlines what we can expect from each other whilst you volunteer with us.

You can expect us to provide you with:	As a volunteer with Royal Voluntary Service we ask that you agree to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A safe, respectful, fair and non-discriminatory volunteering environment</li> <li>• A clear explanation of what your role involves, what is expected of you and who you need to speak to if you need support</li> <li>• Reimbursement of your out of pocket expenses</li> <li>• The ability to stop volunteering with us without pressure or judgement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognise that the needs of the charity's beneficiaries are our priority</li> <li>• Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability</li> <li>• Be accountable for your actions</li> <li>• Support and abide by the charity's instructions within the documents provided to you</li> <li>• Not accepting and gifts or monetary gifts from people you are supporting</li> <li>• Respect and maintain confidentiality, keeping any information you gain about the charity, its services and those we help confidential, even after you leave.</li> </ul>

## ACCEPTANCE AND AGREEMENT

I confirm that I have read and understood the requirements of the role/s for which I have applied to volunteer. I understand the boundaries and responsibilities associated with this role, and know of no reason that I am unable to safely and competently carry out these duties.

## FACT SHEET

### Check in and Chat Information

Thank you for offering your time to provide telephone support to a person who is isolating. A check in and chat call can make all the difference to someone who is lonely at this time.

Telephone support is a positive step to engage with people who may have little or no contact with others, a consequence of self-isolating may lead to issues with confidence, self-esteem, and loneliness.

This support you will be giving is a one off phone call that can be flexible to suit the time you have available to give, and also the time that the interaction takes place. The aim is to ensure that the wellbeing of the isolated person is taken into consideration and possibly identify any practical support they may require.

#### HINTS AND TIPS

Calls should be made at times that are mutually convenient to both the isolating person and yourself.

1. It is important to uphold the confidentiality of the individual at all times. You may receive/hear personal information or details through conversations, forms or other means. All forms of personal information must be treated with respect and be handled in a highly confidential way.
2. We recommend calling from a landline number, unless you have free minutes available on a mobile phone and are willing to use these.
3. Ensure you with-hold your number. See guidance in the Data Protection and Confidentiality section.
4. Think about how you safely store peoples contact details, do not leave these in a place that other people can access. If you are able to lock these away in a safe place, please do so. If you need to destroy this information please ensure it is shredded in a confidential manner.
5. If you choose to continue to support an individual over the telephone and offer this personal act of kindness, this is a personal choice and will not be under the arrangement of Royal Voluntary Service.

## ONGOING SUPPORT

The people we are supporting have been referred to us from a Healthboard, GP or the NHS. They may have been referred for ongoing support and not just a one off phone call. All we ask of you is to support a one off phone call at this stage. If they are referred for ongoing support an alert will be raised to our pool of volunteers via the Good Sam app and may be picked up by someone else.

## GETTING STARTED

Introduce yourself and let person know that you are a volunteer who is supporting the “Looking out for each other” campaign. You are calling to check in with the person to chat and make sure they are ok.

It's difficult to pre-empt what types of calls or queries you are likely to get from an individual, they may need some factual information or just some reassurance during these challenging times. Rest assured that there will be people available to support you if you are faced with a query that raises concerns. Contact the Support Team if you have concerns over the people you are supporting.

### Some questions to help the conversation

- How are you doing today?
- Are you managing to get around the house ok?
- How are you feeling today?
- Have you managed to speak to any of your friends or family?
- What is a typical day like for you? Do you enjoy reading or watching TV?
- Are you managing to prepare your meals?
- Do you have all the medication you need?
- Are you able to get out to the garden for some fresh air?



## POTENTIAL QUESTIONS AND SITUATIONS THAT MAY ARISE

**I'm concerned that I'm not going to see anyone for a long time.**

Recognise their concerns and let them that you are here to listen them. It's ok to go outside if they have a garden and get some fresh air and they can exercise outside as well, keeping the 2m minimum distance.

**I need some practical help, I can't get to the shops or get my prescription.**

Contact the Support Team so the individual can be referred to a Community Response Volunteer.

**I've been told to stay at home but I always go to the community centre on a Wednesday, can I still go?**

If you have been told to stay at home we recommend you follow the guidance from the NHS. Community centres are closed at this time. You can still go out in your garden if you have one and for exercise only, you must keep 2 metres away from any other people.

**I like talking to you, can you call me again next week?**

That's lovely to hear, I've enjoyed talking with you too but I'm unable to call frequently. If the person who referred you has asked that you receive a check in call frequently then you'll hear from another volunteer, but that may not be me. Would you like me to check whether you have this arranged and if not, arrange this for you? Contact the Support Team to check whether the individual has more call requests logged and if not, place a request for weekly/monthly calls (dependent on what the individual has asked for).

**Can I take down your phone number, so I can call you if I need anything?**

Establish what they mean by 'need anything' i.e. is this practical support we can offer by matching them with a Community Response Volunteer. Politely tell the individual that you are not permitted to give out your personal contact details.

**I'm lonely and I don't have anyone I can call.**

Ask who they would usually talk to/spend time with and see if they can contact any of these people via phone.

**I'm worried about my neighbour, can you call them if I give you their number?**

At the moment we are only able to support people that have been referred to us from a Health board, GP or the NHS. I would suggest your neighbour could call 111 or speak to their GP if they have concerns about their health and wellbeing.

**I'm feeling very sad/depressed/hopeless, I think I need some help.**

Talk to them to understand their needs, Do they need practical support we could see if there is a volunteer available to do this. If required, call the Support Team to refer the individual for practical support.

## NEXT STEPS

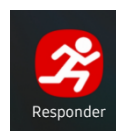
Thank you! You have stepped forward to help your community and NHS through Covid 19.

Now that you have registered as a volunteer, you will need to download the GoodSAM Responder app and login.

To do this go to your relevant app store and search for the GoodSAM responder app and download.



GoodSAM Responder  
GoodSAM LTD



Once the app is downloaded, open the app and sign in.

You may be prompted to give location access for the app, please ensure you do this to ensure alerts are directed to your phone.

Make sure you check the settings within the app so you can be notified of an alert.

### ON DUTY

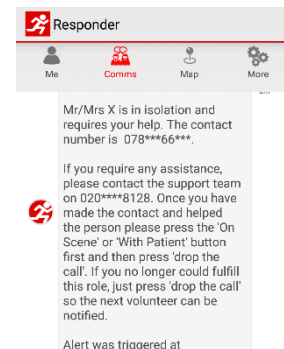
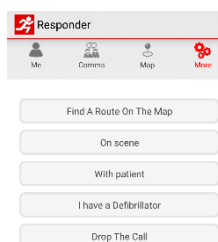
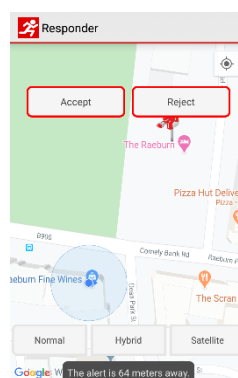
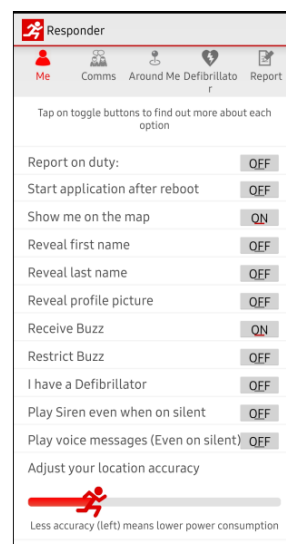
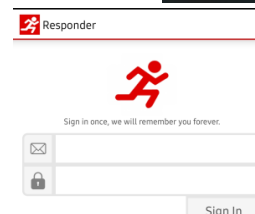
Report on duty needs to be toggled to ON for you to receive any notifications. If you know you are not available to help on a specific day please toggle this to OFF.

When a request for support is raised you will receive an alert. You will have the option to accept or reject the alert.

### ACCEPTING AN ALERT

If you accept the alert you will be sent a notification with the details of the support required. This may either come through via text message or will be within the comms area of the app.

As instructed once you have made contact with the person requesting the support, please accept the call, this is typically found within the more section of the app. Click either "ON SCENE or WITH PATIENT" to confirm you are supporting the request.





## REJECTING AN ALERT

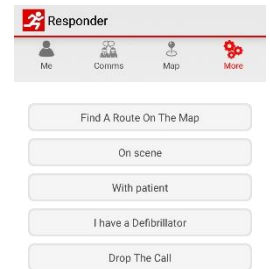
If you are unable to support a request simple click reject.



Rejecting an alert will not prevent further requests coming through to you, if you know you are not available to support, please toggle to “OFF DUTY” as stated in the guidance above.

If you accept a request but then are not able to complete it, please go into the more section of the app and select “DROP THE CALL”.

Please note the “I have a defibrillator” is not relevant to you in your role.



## POTENTIAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### How do I contact the support team?

We are currently setting up and training our Support Team ready to help you. We will forward the contact details for the Support Team with your first alert or request for support. When you receive the number, fill in the box below:

<b>SUPPORT TEAM PHONE NUMBER</b>	
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### How do I claim my out of pocket expenses?

We will communicate how to claim your expenses via email in due course.

### Do I have to accept every request that comes through?

No, only commit to what you can. If you are not available it will remain live on GoodSAM for a period of time until another volunteer accepts it or is sent back to the referrer.

### Will everything come through the GoodSAM app or will I get calls/texts as well?

All communications should be either through the GoodSAM app or via the Support Team. If you have any questions or concerns the Support Team will take your details of your query.

### Who do I call if I encounter any problems?

The Support Team should always be your 1<sup>st</sup> option

### How far am I reasonably expected to travel in order to fulfil a request?

Most of the travel requests will be very local, less than 5 miles. In more rural areas this will increase to a maximum of 20 miles.

### What happens if I accept a request, but then find that I can't make it or get delayed?

You can either “DROP THE CALL” via the GoodSAM app. Or please call the Support Team to let them know, they will reallocate the request. If you have been delayed please inform the person you are supporting.

### How will the person I'm supporting know that I'm a legitimate Royal Voluntary Service Volunteer?

You will be asked to show your profile page on the Good Sam app, please make sure you have your phone on you and don't hand your phone to the isolating person.