



Volunteering and Neighbourliness during “lockdown”

We have received a number of enquiries from people concerned if they will be able to continue to volunteer, or even simply shop for their neighbours, during “lockdown”, or if the Police will prevent them from doing this.

The restrictions announced by government on Monday 23 March included a number of circumstances under which it is acceptable to leave your home.

These included “to provide care or help a vulnerable person”, a definition that should cover most formal and informal volunteer activity that is taking place to support the response to Coronavirus.

Cumbria’s ability to respond effectively to Coronavirus is dependent upon most people who are self-isolating (because they have symptoms) or who have been advised to remain at home (because they have medical conditions that mean they are at particular risk of serious complications if they contract coronavirus) getting help as locally as possible – from friends, family, neighbours and community organisations.

Cumbria Police are fully supportive of this approach and recognise that volunteers should be allowed to continue these essential activities.

However, Police officers will need to “stop and challenge” individuals driving or walking around Cumbria in order to identify those who do not have a legitimate reason to have left their homes.

This means that volunteers and community members should be prepared to explain why they are out – if they can give a reasonable explanation, such as picking up a prescription for their neighbour, or delivering shopping on behalf of a community group, they should be allowed to continue with that activity.

Voluntary and community organisations can consider issuing their members with letters or ID cards identifying them as a volunteer playing a key role in the response to Coronavirus, but we realise this will not be possible in all circumstances, particularly where help is informal.

Please understand that this is a new, and changing, situation for Police officers as well.

This means there is likely to be the odd occasion where things don’t go smoothly. If you are asked to return home despite explaining your reasons for being out, please do so, and then make sure that your group (and your Local Community Resilience Group – details overleaf) are aware so that we can follow it up and get the problems sorted.

Please also take the opportunity to reflect on the way your group operates and consider if there are any changes you can make to better manage the “social distance” between your members. There are some links to useful websites overleaf.

And finally – a huge thank you for the efforts you are making to support people in your local area. Your efforts are a vital part of Cumbria’s overall response to Coronavirus, and very much appreciated.

Carolyn Otley – Chair, Cumbria Community Resilience Group

CarolynO@cumbriacvs.org.uk

30 March 2020



You can contact your Local Community Resilience Groups on the appropriate email below:

Allerdale.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

Barrow.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

Carlisle.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

Copeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

Eden.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

SouthLakeland.AreaSupport@cumbria.gov.uk

For advice on volunteering safely during Coronavirus, and tips on how to support your neighbours, you can visit the following websites:

<https://www.cumbria.gov.uk/coronavirus/landingpage.asp>

<https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/coronavirus/covid-19-volunteering/>

<http://www.cumbriaaction.org.uk/>