

A hand holding a smartphone is the central focus, with various digital security icons overlaid on the screen. These icons include a padlock, a Wi-Fi signal, a cloud, a laptop, a mobile phone, and an envelope, all connected by a network of lines. The background is a blurred image of a person's hands, suggesting a community or group setting. The overall design features a blue and green color scheme with diagonal lines.

COVID-19

COMMUNITY GROUPS

**SAFEGUARDING, DATA PROTECTION
AND DBS GUIDANCE AND ADVICE**

Wiltshire Council



INTRODUCTION

This factsheet provides information to community groups in Wiltshire who are responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, regarding safeguarding, DBS checks and data protection.

This is to support groups in their work to protect vulnerable people from potentially unscrupulous people and to support volunteers to feel confident the work they are doing is safe and appropriate for all.

WHAT IS THE LATEST GOVERNMENT ADVICE?

For community groups set up that enable volunteers to provide shopping, meals or prescription services, where they do not go into an individual's home, there is no legal requirement for you to carry out DBS checks on volunteers. Some established organisations (such as national charities) may already have this policy in place and DBS is working to process any checks as quickly as possible.

For local organisations being spontaneously set up to support people in the local community there are sensible and pragmatic steps that can be taken.

The most important thing you can do as a volunteer organiser is to ensure your group considers safeguarding practices. Adopting simple precautions like keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts supports you in helping your neighbourhoods while protecting vulnerable residents. If working in pairs, you must stay two metres apart at all times.

You should go shopping for basic necessities, for example food and medicine, as infrequently as possible. Leave supplies at the door, where possible, to avoid entering another household.



SAFEGUARDING STEPS TO SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS AND VULNERABLE RESIDENTS

There are many sensible and pragmatic steps that can be taken to safeguard your community group, the volunteers and the vulnerable residents you are supporting.

- Check ID details for new volunteers who come forwards confirm their home address and request a personal reference.
- We recommend that all volunteers should be over 18 and over 21 if needing to drive for their role – for more information click [here](#)
- Appoint a safeguarding lead within your community group and ensure that volunteers know to report any concerns to the safeguarding lead. The safeguarding lead should subsequently be aware of where to escalate their concerns.
- Set clear guidelines for each volunteer, advising them of the roles they should and should not perform. As an example, volunteers should not undertake any activities that require going into the home of the vulnerable person, such as personal care.
- Ensure volunteers understand the escalation route for any safeguarding concerns. Ideally this information should be set out in a signed and returned volunteer agreement. This would include information about data confidentiality agreements, volunteer driving, health declarations and more. An excellent

template volunteer agreement is available at www.wessexcommunityaction.org.uk/covid-19-vcse-resource-hub

- Be sensible about dealing with personal data. Some of the basic steps for COVID-19 community groups can be found [here](#)
- When collecting or delivering prescriptions, especially where the medication is controlled, it is recommended that only ID verified, or DBS checked volunteers complete this task. www.wessexcommunityaction.org.uk/ccg-prescription-collection-guidance
- We recommend that records are kept of all the volunteers who are helping your group, with the names and addresses of the people they have directly supported (template documents are available through your Community Engagement Manager www.wiltshire.gov.uk/council-democracy-area-boards)

We would encourage all volunteers to ask the following questions as part of their doorstep check when connecting with a resident:

- Have they got enough food?
- Are they warm/cool enough?
- Are friends and family helping them?
- Do they have enough medicines to last over the next few days?

FURTHER SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION OR TRAINING

Free online safeguarding training is available, and we would recommend that all community group coordinators complete the Awareness of Abuse and Neglect of Children (Level 1) and Safeguarding Adults (Level 1). Visit wiltshirescb.safeguardingchildren.co.uk to register and access the courses.

There is a vast array of information available on all topics on wiltshire.gov.uk/public-health-coronavirus or wessexcommunityaction.org.uk/covid-19-vcse-resource-hub

Simple safeguarding video [here](#) from Waltham Forest Council: If you see something... say something.

DBS CHECKS

For further government advice on DBS checks visit [here](#)

DATA PROTECTION

The Information Commissioner's Office sets out data protection information relevant to COVID19 response groups [here](#)

ADULT SAFEGUARDING

If you are concerned that someone is at risk of neglect, abuse, or appears to have care and support needs that are not being met, for example they are struggling to keep themselves clean or prepare food, please contact Wiltshire Council's Adult Social Care's Advice and Contact Team on **0300 4560111**.

The Advice and Contact Team opening times

Monday to Thursday, 8.30am – 5.20pm

Friday 8.30am to 4.20pm

For further information and guidance, please visit adults.wiltshire.gov.uk/Information/safeguarding

Outside those hours, evening and weekends, please contact the Emergency Duty Service on **0300 456 0100**. If anyone is in immediate danger please contact **999**.

CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING

If you believe a child is in immediate danger or left alone call the police on 999. If you believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm or injury, neglect or abuse, report your concerns to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on **0300 456 0108**

MASH opening times

Monday to Thursday, 8.45am – 5pm

Friday 8.45am to 4pm

For further information and guidance please visit wiltshire.gov.uk/children-young-people-worried

Outside those hours, evening and weekends, please contact the Emergency Duty Service on **0300 456 0100**. If anyone is in immediate danger, please contact **999**.