



COVID-19 – Advice for Community Groups and Resilience Teams

Supporting Vulnerable Residents and Information Storage

Context

Dumfries and Galloway Council wants to ensure that by working in partnership with other statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations that we are able to maximise our collective ability to respond and support the needs of our most vulnerable citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following advice has been prepared to assist community groups and resilience teams to take appropriate measures should there be a requirement for you to collect and store personal data during this pandemic.

Ready Scotland – Scottish Government Advice for Community Groups

Ready Scotland has prepared [guidance](#) with established community resilience teams in mind, but this can also be used by any group of people who want to help in their community during the COVID-19 outbreak in a way that is safe, sustainable and protects our most vulnerable citizens. The guidance document includes useful information on protecting yourself, as a volunteer, and those you want to help; communicating; supporting vulnerable citizens; an integrated response and requesting help from volunteers.

COVID-19 is having a significant impact on all of our lives, particularly on the many vulnerable and elderly residents living in our communities. If your group is helping vulnerable residents, then please follow all the relevant [Government advice](#) and consider how you can do this in a way which is safe for those that you are helping and also for yourself and your team of volunteers.

For example:

- Phone - Exchange phone numbers with your neighbours and keep in touch regularly by text or telephone call.
- Deliveries - If your group is doing essential deliveries of food or medicine, ensure you follow [NHS guidance](#). Please do not volunteer to help if you or a member of your household has any symptoms of COVID-19 but instead follow the appropriate isolation advice before offering/resuming any volunteering activities.
- Safety – Vulnerable residents may find themselves vulnerable to scams. Where they exist, please consider signing up to [Neighbourhood Watch Scotland alerts](#) to find out about scams in your local area so that you can share this information across your community networks.

Considerations when Handling Sensitive Data

We would recommend that you consider a leaflet drop to households in your community which has useful contact numbers/emails, including those for members of your resilience team/community group

The responsibility then lies with individuals to make contact direct with their local resilience team or any other relevant organisation and ask for support and negates the need for local resilience teams to hold any personal or sensitive data unnecessarily.

If required, we strongly recommend that you keep to a minimum, any data that you may need to support people and that any information you do hold is held securely. This information could be captured at the point of contact to ensure you can fulfil the support requested (name/address/telephone number/email) and by no other means. No medical or further personal details should be captured or stored.

All information should be captured and stored in line with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) Legislation and any guidance provided by the Information Commissioners Office ([ICO](#)) and thereafter, disposed of in accordance with appropriate regulation once the COVID-19 response has concluded.

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) – Community Groups and COVID-19: What you need to know about data protection

As COVID-19 continues to sweep across the UK, more and more people are driven to help the most vulnerable in our communities. Church groups, neighbourhood and residents associations are being set up to support the work of existing community groups, services and charities.

Often, these groups need to handle sensitive personal information and share it with others. And that means taking account of data protection law.

Ian Hulme, Director for Regulatory Assurance at ICO has prepared a [blog for Community Groups and on 'what you need to know about data protection'](#) that I am sure you will find very helpful. The ICO have also published a useful [Q and A for organisations](#) that may also be of help. However, if you have any questions please call 0303 123 1113.

This is a living document and is therefore subject to review and will be updated periodically.

COVID-19 Community Response Cell

Dumfries and Galloway Council

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