

# GUIDANCE FOR ROTHERHAM HEROES

## BEFRIENDING SUPPORT

Thank you once again for supporting the Rotherham Community Hub by becoming a Rotherham Hero volunteer. The Community Hub was established to help vulnerable people across Rotherham during the Coronavirus pandemic.

With residents self-isolating, loneliness and mental health becomes a serious issue for many. That is why one of the key areas of support that Rotherham Heroes can provide is to simply be a friendly voice at the end of the phone.



#rotherhamtogether



**This guidance has been written for volunteers supporting all those people in Rotherham who are feeling lonely and isolated. It can also be used as a checklist for community groups supporting volunteers.**

**This guide is also designed 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.**

## **AS A VOLUNTEER WITH ROTHERHAM COMMUNITY HUB YOU CAN EXPECT:**

- to be treated with respect and courtesy
- to be treated fairly, regardless of gender, sexual orientation, age, parental or marital status, disability, religion, colour, race, ethnic or national origins, or socio/economic background
- to have regular contact and support from the Rotherham Community Hub
- relevant and up to date information and advice
- recognition and thanks
- reimbursement of any out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of your volunteering
- adequate public liability and professional indemnity insurance
- respect to your right to privacy and that of your contacts.

## **IN RETURN WE ASK THAT YOU:**

- are open and honest in your dealings with us
- treat fellow volunteers, staff and people you are supporting with courtesy and respect
- let us know if you wish to change the nature of your contribution
- let us know if we can improve the service and support that you receive.

# GOOD PRACTICE

Helping someone who is lonely can make all the difference at this time. We cannot do this physically, so we are asking that volunteers provide telephone support to identified people.

Telephone support is a positive step to engage with people who may have little or no contact with others, a consequence of self-isolating, which may lead to people feeling worried, anxious, low in mood and lonely.

The support you will be giving is a one-off phone call that can be flexible to suit the time you have available to give.

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.

## **Treat others the same way you would want to be treated.**

- It is always important to uphold the confidentiality of the individual. You may receive/hear personal information or details through conversations, forms or other means. All types of personal information must be treated with respect and be handled in a highly confidential way.
- We recommend calling from a landline number, unless you have free minutes available on a mobile phone and are willing to use these.
- Ensure you withhold your number. To withhold your number on individual calls just dial 141 before the telephone number you want to call. This may not be possible on some mobile phones but if you look at the links below, they give step by step instructions for different phones.

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=IenZfiT0ouQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IenZfiT0ouQ)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U9iQt\\_Uk1A](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0U9iQt_Uk1A)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqJoXZbKnT0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqJoXZbKnT0)

- Think about how you safely store peoples contact details, do not leave these in a place that other people can access. If you can 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.
- The person you're supporting could be at risk of isolation for any reason, including cognitive difficulties or dementia. Be aware that when you have a conversation you may need to repeat yourself, revisit elements of the conversation or communicate more clearly than you may be used to in order to have a successful chat.

## GETTING STARTED

Staff from the Rotherham Community Hub will have contacted the person first to let them know to expect a phone call. They will have given the person your name so they will be expecting a call from you.

Introduce yourself and let the person know that you are a volunteer who is supporting the Rotherham Community Hub. You are calling to check in with the person to chat and make sure they are ok.

It's difficult to pre-empt how the conversation will go and what people will want to talk about.

**We hope the following questions might help you in your conversation.**

*How are you doing today?*

*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?*

*What do you enjoy reading or watching on TV?*

*What are your hobbies/interests if you have any?*

*Do you have a garden and if so, can you get out in the garden for some fresh air?*

*How are you looking after yourself?*

## ENDING THE CALL

We are not asking you to be on the phone for a long time, just a 10-minute conversation can make all the difference to someone, letting them know that there are people reaching out to them. If you do find that people want to talk at length, please politely explain that as a volunteer you do have other people to contact and that you will call them again within the next week.

# 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 know that you are here to listen them. It's ok to go outside if they have a garden and get some fresh air.

**I need some practical help; I can't get to the shops or get my prescription.** Tell the person you have made a note of this and are going to pass this onto staff at the Rotherham Hub.

**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.

**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.

**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. 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 staff at the Rotherham Hub to refer the individual for practical support.

**I am running out of money please can you lend me some, I'll pay you back.** Don't give or lend people money instead please report it to staff at the Rotherham Hub and reassure the person that someone from the Hub will contact them.

**It would be good to keep in touch, can I add you to you to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram?** Please treat this as a professional relationship and do not share your details with the person you are supporting or ask if they want to be included in any of your social media groups.

## VICTIMS OF CRIME

At this time most people are looking out in a kind way for their neighbours and people living in their community. However, we do know that some people are out to take advantage of people's vulnerabilities. Fraudsters may use the fact more people are staying at home, as an opportunity to operate doorstep scams. If you suspect this is happening, then please report it to Rotherham police on 101 and staff at the Rotherham Hub.

## SAFEGUARDING

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 staff at the Rotherham Community Hub 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.

- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Safeguarding Adults,  
Telephone: 01709 822330  
Out of hours: 01709 336080**
- **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)  
on 01709 336080 (Children)**

## ADDITIONAL NEEDS

Staff at the Rotherham Community Hub will have spoken to the person you are calling to understand any practical needs they might have. However, people might disclose to you something else which they have forgotten to mention previously. You don't need to solve these problems for the person. Instead tell them that you have made a note of their query or concern and will pass it onto staff at the Rotherham Community Hub who will contact them.

We recognise that some people may have additional needs and so we have included some further information below.

### Supporting a person living with dementia?

Living with dementia at any time brings everyday challenges for the person and those around them. COVID-19 may mean that people affected by dementia are no longer able to take part in activities which supported them to live well, and their carers and families may be caring for them 24/7 with no respite.

Dementia can make individuals forget details, but they will remember the feeling of reassurance and support provided by your call. This really will help to stop negative feelings caused by isolation.

### Supporting a person living with poor mental health?

Within your role you may be asked to support someone who is living with poor mental health, one in four people experience mental health problems each year and a friendly chat can help individuals through this difficult time. You may not be aware of an individual's mental health and this may not even be discussed during your conversation. One of the amazing things you can offer as a volunteer is your listening skills and try to do this in a non-judgemental manner.

### Supporting someone who is blind or visually impaired

You should have been told by the staff at the Rotherham Community Hub if the person you are calling is blind or visually impaired. Being blind or visually impaired does not prevent people from living full and active lives. We need to be mindful when offering suggestions about keeping well that we factor this in. A good place to start is to always listen to the person and find out what works for them. This site offers some very practical advice so you could take a quick look before making the call, [www.rnib.org.uk/advice/reading-home-leisure](http://www.rnib.org.uk/advice/reading-home-leisure).

With everyone it is important to listen and let them do the talking. Ask questions to gather information about how the person is feeling?

Listen without interrupting and repeat what has been said to check you have understood. Ask open questions – What, where, when, why, how?

Show someone you understand by telling them (e.g. "I can see how that's been hard to deal with") and don't make judgements about what you're told.

# KEEPING YOU SAFE

It is so important that in helping others we remember to take care of ourselves.

You will not be in physical contact with the people you are supporting, but we are committed to making sure that all our volunteers keep well. Please follow the steps below to make sure that we all protect the NHS and save lives.

## 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.
- Wash your hands as soon as you get home.
- 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.
- If you go out, stay two metres (six feet) away from other people at all times.
- 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.
- Don't get into personal care or going into people's houses – be assured that other agencies are looking into this.

# KEEPING OTHERS SAFE

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.

Please 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 health diagnosis), we ask that you maintain confidentiality and do not discuss or disclose any data or information with anyone unless you feel there is a safeguarding issue.

Keep any data securely. Don't leave messages on answerphones with any personal information if you are not sure who is going to be able to hear them. Ensure others cannot hear you and avoid calls on loudspeaker if you live with others.

## Social Media

We are asking volunteers not to include the people they are supporting on their own social media groups. Please treat this as a professional working relationship.



# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

It's natural to feel anxious during times of uncertainty, like during the current coronavirus outbreak. We all have mental health, just like we have physical health and it's important that we take steps to look after it, particularly during worrying and uncertain times like this.

In your conversations with people you can help them to look after their own mental health and wellbeing. There are five steps, known as 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' which we can incorporate into our everyday lives to help with our mental health:



## BE ACTIVE

**It is important to keep active whilst you are self-isolating.  
Try and move around and stay active, for approx. 30 minutes a day.**

There are some great tips in the following links:

[www.sportengland.org/news/how-stay-active-while-youre-home](http://www.sportengland.org/news/how-stay-active-while-youre-home)

The Chief Medical Officer's own physical activity guidance highlights the benefits of maintaining muscle strength, balance and flexibility. Try looking at the following sites:

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/sitting-exercises/)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/strength-exercises/)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/balance-exercises/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/balance-exercises/)

[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/flexibility-exercises/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/flexibility-exercises/)



## CONNECT

**Reach out to others, spend time speaking to friends and family.  
Share a selfie with friends to show what you are up to and start a conversation.  
It can help you feel connected even if you're working remotely.  
Find out how at [mhfaengland.org/my-whole-self/selfie-how-to](http://mhfaengland.org/my-whole-self/selfie-how-to).**

Virtual social sessions- If you usually schedule time in the day for an activity or exercising with friends, continue to make time for this over webcam or phone. Here are some ideas:

Video calling for craft session or cooking sessions

Daily online quiz sessions with your friends/family.

While it's important to keep up to date with current affairs, constantly watching the news can increase feelings of anxiety. Try to only check it once a day and stick to reliable news sources such as the BBC or use the NHS website for health advice.

We have some guidance here on how people can use social media to connect with others:

[www.youtube.com/channel/UC0iHIeKXaIt2\\_AZQXz4LFnw](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0iHIeKXaIt2_AZQXz4LFnw)



## GIVE

**Give time to yourself, have a bath, read that book you've promised yourself you will read one day.**

Give yourself tasks to complete each day it will give you a sense of achievement.

Give yourself a good night's sleep. For full details on tips on getting a good night's sleep visit [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/ten-top-tips-good-sleep](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/blog/ten-top-tips-good-sleep)



## KEEP LEARNING

Virtual cooking sessions with friends.

Find that musical instrument that you have stored away and start learning again.

What about learning a new language?

Learn about places in this country and around the world. Some museums are offering virtual tours.

[artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en](http://artsandculture.google.com/partner?hl=en)



## TAKE NOTICE

**Try and have a daily routine. Get up at the same time and try to have some structure.**

Although you may have some extra time in bed aim to wake up around the same time every day. This helps stabilise your internal clock and improve your sleep overall. You'll feel less tired, more refreshed, and find it easier to concentrate throughout the day.

Keep to your established morning routine if you can – get ready, washed, and dressed as if you are going out.

Many people are commenting on how good it is to hear birds singing. Open your window listen and take notice of what you can see. Many places are offering people opportunities to observe nature from the comfort of their own armchair.

There are more tips on looking after mental health and wellbeing. Every Mind Matters offers expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

[www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/)

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing)

# USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS

- Age UK Information and Helpline

[www.ageuk.org.uk/rotherham/about-us/news/articles/2020/coronavirus-covid-19/](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/rotherham/about-us/news/articles/2020/coronavirus-covid-19/)

Advice Line number is **01709 835214** for independent and confidential information and advice service for older people, their families and carers.

- **Citizens Advice Bureau**

Telephone: **01709 515680**

Monday to Friday 9.30am till 5pm

[www.citizensadvicerotherham.org.uk/](http://www.citizensadvicerotherham.org.uk/)

- **Cruse**

FREEPHONE helpline: **0808 808 1677**

[www.cruse.org.uk/](http://www.cruse.org.uk/)

- **Domestic Violence National Domestic Abuse Helpline**

Telephone: **0808 2000 247**

[www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/](http://www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk/)

The Men's Advice Line, for male domestic abuse survivors – **0808 801 0327**

- **Listening Ear South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Helpline**

Free of charge and does not have a waiting list. To refer a person who has been affected by bereavement, please contact **0800 048 5224** or [helpline@listening-ear.co.uk](mailto:helpline@listening-ear.co.uk)

- **Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub**

Telephone: **01709 336080** (Children)

- **NHS**

(Non-Urgent): **111**

Emergency Medical Attention: **999**

- **Police**

(Emergency): **999** Police

(Non-Emergency): **101**

- **RNIB**

Telephone: **0303 1239999**

[www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

- **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Safeguarding Adults**

Telephone: **01709 822330**

Out of hours: **01709 336080**

- **Samaritans**

Telephone: **116 123**

[www.samaritans.org/](http://www.samaritans.org/)

- **The Silver Line**

Telephone: **0800 4708090**

open 24 hours a day

[www.thesilverline.org.uk/](http://www.thesilverline.org.uk/)

- **Victim support**

Telephone: **0800 652 9431**

[www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

# SIGNPOSTING

We want your conversations to be about hobbies and interests and how people can keep mentally well. However we do know that people might trust you with other things going on in their lives. The numbers on the previous page are organisations and services that can help the person you are supporting so please pass them on.

Please stick to these numbers only, they are organisations we trust. If there is an area not covered please let staff at the Rotherham Community Hub know.

# FINALLY

**Please contact us at the Rotherham Community Hub if there is anything you need, if you feel something is not right or if your own circumstances change. We are truly grateful for the support you are giving to others at this time. You are helping people to stay home, protect frontline workers and save lives.**



[www.rotherham.gov.uk/volunteer](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/volunteer)

Telephone: 01709 807319

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LONELINESS SUPPORT

#RotherhamTogether