



### What is a mutual aid group?

COVID-19 (coronavirus) mutual aid groups are self-organised groups of people setting up individually to support and help people on their street or in their neighbourhoods. Members of mutual aid groups are volunteers.

There is no uniform way to develop a group and each group is advised to work in a way which best benefits their community.

You can volunteer to take part in a group whether you are self-isolating or not. Volunteers who are able might perform tasks that self-isolated people can't do. People who are self-isolating but who feel well enough, can help co-ordinate a group from home. Many groups are organised online, for example through Facebook or WhatsApp.

**Please DO NOT volunteer to come into contact with others if you are currently in an at-risk group, at high risk of infection or experiencing symptoms yourself. Follow government and NHS guidance on who should self-isolate.**

UK Government response to coronavirus: <https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response%C2%A0>

NHS information: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

### What does volunteering for a mutual aid group involve?

Groups organise their own activities in response to local community needs. Some tasks might include:

- Leafletting to reach people who are isolated and to raise awareness of the group.

- Providing contact information for people to contact for support. A phone number is more useful for people who do not have internet access.
- Running errands, shopping or other activities for people who are self-isolating.
- Providing emotional support by telephone or online for people who are self-isolating or struggling with the effects of the pandemic.

## How can I find my local mutual aid group?

Mutual aid groups are springing up all over the UK. Covid Mutual Aid have an up to date map and list of local groups on their website: <https://covidmutualaid.org/local-groups>

You can also register your own group on the site.

## How do I set up a mutual aid group?

You can set up a mutual aid group if there isn't one in your area. The size of the area is up to your group. A local group to cover your street or neighbourhood could be more effective than a larger group. It is also easier to manage data and information at a more local level.

Covid Mutual Aid have a Facebook group for group admins/organisers to share learning, resources and support: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/151925132663139/>

Many mutual aid groups are setting up Facebook or WhatsApp groups for volunteers to join.

How to create a Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/help/167970719931213>

How to create a WhatsApp group: <https://faq.whatsapp.com/en/android/26000123/?category=5245251>

## Data Protection

If collecting information be aware of your role in managing personal data. Ensure that people who register know where their data will be stored and why, and that any data is password protected. People should be able to request their data is removed if needed. As few people as possible should have access to the data.

We recommend organising and communicating with your volunteers online, for example through Facebook or WhatsApp groups. You can then communicate and share information quickly and without meeting in person. Keep discussion focused on the practicalities of your local response to coronavirus - information can be quickly lost in group chats.

## Social Distancing Precautions

Remember that although you are delivering mutual aid in your community, we are all advised to practice social distancing and follow official guidance. If you are assisting someone who is self-isolated, please follow the necessary social distancing precautions.

Volunteers who are shopping for others are advised to phone the inhabitant rather than knocking on the door, and to leave shopping at a safe distance from the door.

