

## COVID-19 Safeguarding Guidance for Parishes



### **Safeguarding**

In these unprecedented times, it is right and good that people want to be able to come together to help others. This is how some of our able parishioners may want to express their living faith. However, we have to be mindful that, in these difficult times, there will be some people who will use this opportunity to identify and prey on children, young people, vulnerable adults and vulnerable families. They might also take this opportunity to try to groom young people who are volunteering.

This Guidance is not comprehensive. If you have any specific questions, please contact our Safeguarding Adviser by email: [Caterina.O'Connor@rcag.org.uk](mailto:Caterina.O'Connor@rcag.org.uk) or mobile: 07539893396

### **Volunteering Opportunities**

The Scottish Government has developed 'Scotland Cares' for people who want to volunteer during the pandemic. Those who want to offer support can do so through The British Red Cross or Volunteer Scotland. These organisations can be accessed through the [www.readyscotland.org](http://www.readyscotland.org), which has the ability to fast-track applications for the Protection of Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG), and can ensure that targeted help gets to those who are most in need. They can organise vetting, training and support. The vetting of volunteers for the Church and other organisations has been suspended to allow Disclosure Scotland to concentrate on the NHS/Care and Ready Scotland applications.

### **Volunteering Within Parishes**

If parishes want a more local response, then we ask that this is done within both the government's health advice <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely--2/coronavirus-how-to-help-safely> and the Archdiocese of Glasgow Safeguarding Processes

All normal volunteering in parishes has ceased while the Churches are closed. Any new volunteering should be limited to the following:

- Organising/ collecting/delivering Groceries
- Organising/ collecting/delivering Prescriptions
- General errands e.g. putting bins out, posting letters
- Telephone Befriending

## How To Do This Safely

It might be helpful for parishes to consider:

- Having 1 or 2 volunteers coordinating any parish activities. All people who want to volunteer should enlist via the coordinator(s), and all requests for assistance should come via the coordinator(s).
  - Where possible utilise volunteers who have gone through the AoG Safe Recruitment processes and have a PVG in place;
  - All new volunteers should complete the Volunteering Form (below);
  - All applications must be seen by the Parish Priest and/or Parish Safeguarding Coordinator, in order to ensure that they are a 'person of good standing'. They will also be aware if they are subject to safeguarding concerns e.g. being considered for Listing & Barring by Disclosure Scotland, Registered Sex Offender etc.
- A mobile phone should be purchased by the parish to use for the coordination of volunteers and requests for assistance so that personal numbers are not given out.
- Mobile phones should also be purchased by the parish if a Telephone Befriending System is put in place.
- For the sake of hygiene, phones should not be passed around. If they have to be passed around, they will require to be cleaned and safe distances will need to be maintained.
- Those coordinating the volunteers/requests for assistance should have agreed hours when these requests can be made. This means that the coordinator(s) will not be constantly on call and the volunteer or person requesting assistance will be sure of a response.
- Given the requirements of keeping a safe distance, it is not practical for volunteers to work in two's. Lone working is not advised. Volunteers should 'buddy up' and let the other person know what they are doing, for whom they are doing it, when they go out and when they return. If the 'buddy' has any concern for the other volunteers' safety, they can pass this on to the Parish Priest, Parish Safeguarding Coordinator or, in an emergency, to the Police.
- Any collections or deliveries of groceries/prescriptions/mail, putting out bins etc. should be done within Government COVID19 recommendations for cleanliness and social distancing. Volunteers should wear disposable gloves and change these after each person/activity to avoid cross contamination. Groceries etc. should be left at the door.

- If Telephone Befriending is set up in the parish, coordinators and volunteers should be careful not to develop dependencies.
  - This is a welfare check and is not counselling.
  - The volunteer should keep a list of who they are talking to, and note the start and end time of each call.
  - Do not make promises that cannot be fulfilled, e.g. that the calls will go beyond the pandemic or that you can do other tasks etc.
  - All volunteers must be clear that the Church has mandatory reporting procedures. This might be a time of reflection for people and there may be a possibility that someone might disclose abuse or harm. The volunteer cannot agree to confidentiality. If they are told anything, which indicates that someone is being harmed or has been harmed, then it must be passed on to the Safeguarding Adviser.
  
- If volunteers have any general concerns regarding someone they are assisting, they should in the first instance contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Parish Priest or Parish Safeguarding Coordinator. If their concern is to do with abuse or any serious issue, they should contact the Safeguarding Adviser. If they are concerned for someone's immediate safety, they should contact Police Scotland.
  
- Each parish should provide all volunteers with the Concerns Flow Chart, Mandatory Reporting Process (available in Safeguarding Resources) and telephone numbers for those to contact.

# ARCHDIOCESE OF GLASGOW

## SELF-DECLARATION FORM *(Private and Confidential)*

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

### To be completed by the Volunteer

|                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Full Name:               |  |
| Address and phone number |  |

### I declare that:

- The details given above are accurate
- There has never been any cause for concern regarding my conduct that would in any way affect my contact with children and/or vulnerable adults
- I understand and accept that in volunteering during this pandemic, there will be no “regulated” work with vulnerable groups.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please print your name: \_\_\_\_\_

### To be completed by Parish

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parish Priest/ Parish Safeguarding Coordinator/ Other

| Volunteer accepted as a person of good standing | Yes   | No   |
|---|---|--|
| Tasks assigned to Volunteer                     | Organising/ Collecting/Delivering Groceries | Organising/Collecting/Delivering Prescriptions |
|   | General Errands                             | Telephone Befriending                          |
|   | Other (specify)                             |  |