

This resource has been developed in response to the national lockdown announced in January 2021. It is designed to support volunteer-involving and volunteer run museums in the South West to involve volunteers safely in this still evolving situation. It covers:

- Involving volunteers safely during the current national lockdown (2021)
- Involving volunteers safely at the Museum where this is permitted, and when Stay at Home guidance is lifted
- Supporting and safeguarding volunteers – mental health and wellbeing; wanting to help out; safeguarding

This resource supersedes the April 2020 Covid-19 resource Guidelines for Safe Volunteering during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Involving volunteers safely during the current national lockdown (2021):

National Lockdown: Stay at Home guidance is currently in force.

[View the latest government guidance](#)

The guidance details permitted reasons for leaving home. These include providing charitable and voluntary services, where these cannot be reasonably carried out at home. However the guidance emphasizes that “you must volunteer from home unless it is not reasonably possible for you to do so”.

Government have also produced [further guidance on safe and effective volunteering during the pandemic](#).

In the lockdown put in place in March 2020, The Home Office confirmed that museum activities to keep the museum secure and protect and preserve the collections on-site, requiring in person attendance, were permitted.

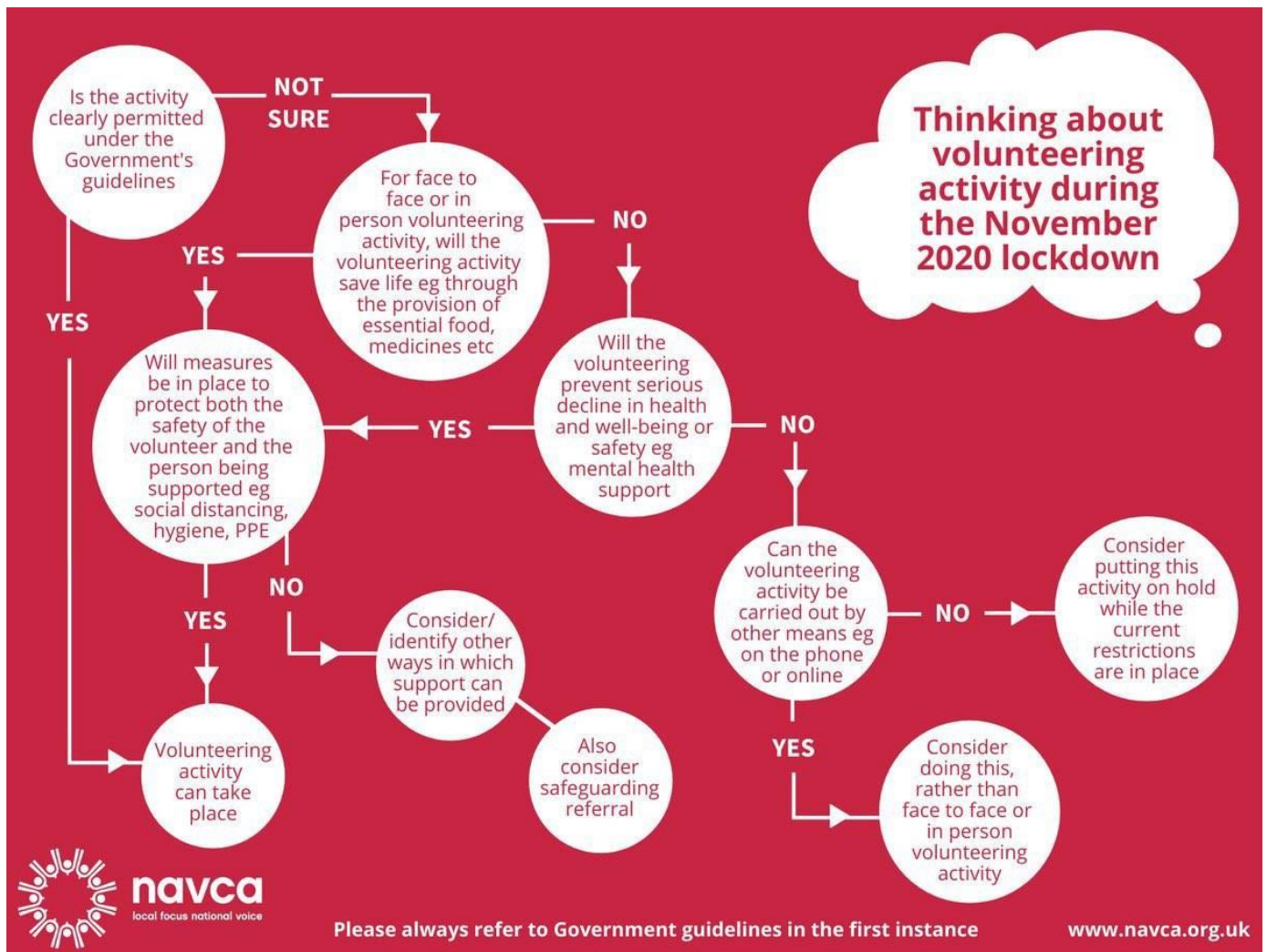
This practical [guidance sheet on keeping your collections safe](#) from our Collections Development Officer Helena Jaeschke will help you to consider what you may need to do to keep museum buildings and collections secure, and access your site safely and efficiently and in line with current guidelines.

Top tips:

- Throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic we have created [various resources to provide support and advice](#) during this time.
- Please [get in touch](#) if you require any further support or advice.

Resource:

We advise that you concentrate above all on staying safe and healthy and looking after each other. A flow chart, produced by National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) for the November 2020 lockdown, may be helpful to museums in considering the necessity of leaving home to volunteer. It identifies volunteering activity that will save life or prevent a serious decline in health as a 'reasonable reason' for leaving home and suggests that volunteering activity that doesn't meet this threshold should be put on hold.



In addition, be aware that there are guidelines about carrying out activities as a charitable organisation during the pandemic. These have been helpfully summarized by our Accreditation Technical Advisor Vicky Dawson and will be available shortly on our website or via your MDO.

A word about furloughed staff

If staff have been furloughed It is important to note that charities should not be using volunteers, whether through businesses providing pro bono support, or individuals volunteering, to 'backfill' for roles that are currently furloughed.

The furlough scheme is designed to support organisations to pay wages of employees who cannot be paid because the work has disappeared due to coronavirus; volunteering would suggest an attempt to benefit from the scheme but still maintain normal activity and is therefore advised against.

Involving volunteers safely at the Museum where this is permitted, and when Stay at Home guidance is lifted

Coronavirus Guidelines

Read the latest Government guidelines on [safe and effective volunteering during the pandemic](#).

Any volunteering activity must be carried out in a way that follows [social distancing guidance](#).

Workplaces have a duty of care towards customers, staff and those involved in their organisation, including volunteers. During the coronavirus pandemic, this means following [Covid-secure guidance](#) and ensuring the workplace is Covid-secure.

Following Covid-secure guidance involves carrying out risk assessments, taking actions to mitigate risks, taking steps to comply with test and trace guidance and ensuring that mask-wearing and social distancing happens. This includes thinking about the risk of travelling to work or volunteer in the current pandemic.

For more information on reopening guidelines and test and trace guidelines for museums, have a look at [our coronavirus pages](#).

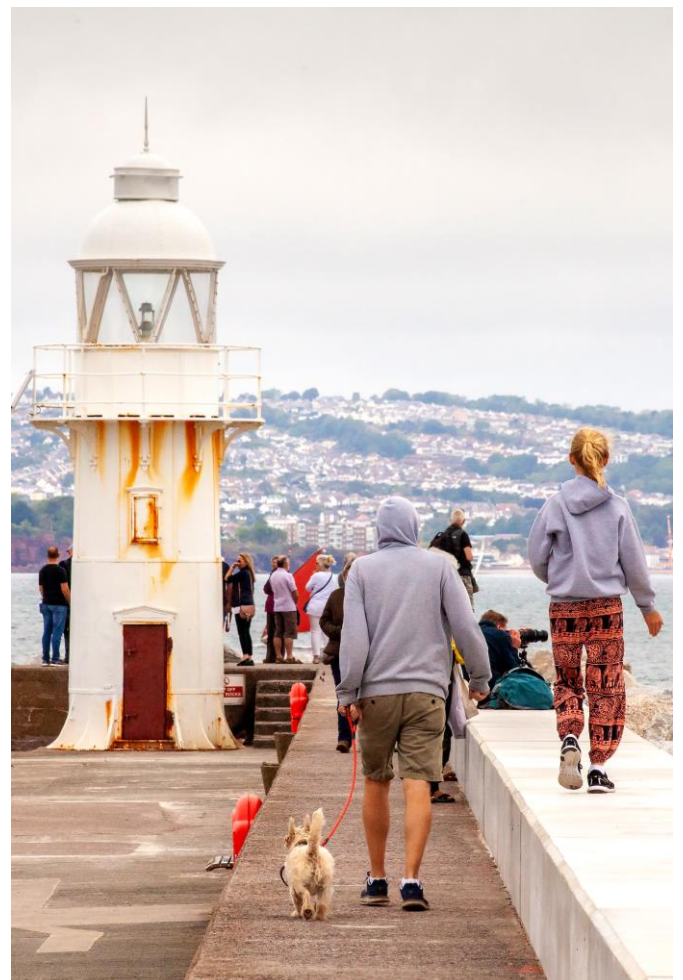
Supporting and safeguarding volunteers – things to consider:

Mental Health and Wellbeing

The current pandemic is affecting mental health and wellbeing. Volunteers may be facing challenges in their personal lives, concerns about their health and ongoing feelings of stress and 'overload'. It is important to consider mental health and wellbeing and take steps to support each other's wellbeing. Suggestions our [Workforce Wellbeing resource](#) may be helpful.

Helping Out in the Pandemic

Staff and volunteers may wish to volunteer to provide vital support to vulnerable people and to those shielding during the current lockdown. Furloughed staff may also wish to volunteer for another organisation in this way, and can do so. This government advice on [how to help safely](#) provides useful information.



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Safeguarding

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. These following resources are an excellent place to start to understand how to put this into practice at your museum:

- Kids in Museums [Safeguarding Overview](#)
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations [Safeguarding Guidelines](#)

These two videos, highlighted on the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) [Resources Hub](#), may help you to explore what safeguarding means for us all, and how to stay safe whilst volunteering:

- [Staying safe whilst volunteering](#)
- [Safeguarding tips](#)

DBS checking remains unchanged. The definition of Regulated Activity, which requires a DBS check on the person carrying out this activity, is enshrined in law and therefore still stands during the current pandemic.

You will need to carry out DBS checks only for roles that require one, in line with your safeguarding policies. Useful information on DBS checking can be found here:

- SAFE CIC [Frequently Asked Questions blog](#)
- Share Museums East [Safeguarding for Museums: A Series of Short Guides](#)

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