

Advice for volunteer coordinators in museums, in light of changes to COVID-19 government guidance

The rules surrounding Covid-19 have changed, following the [Living with Covid-19 announcements on 21/02](#). Where does this leave your organisation's Covid-response?

Our Sustainable Volunteering Officer, Eleanor Moore, has created this resource to make sure you continue to minimise risks for all museum volunteers, staff and visitors.

Whilst recognising that risk factors will vary from space to space – between, for example, larger, well ventilated spaces with lower numbers of people, and confined spaces with a lot of people at peak times – we've put together some suggestions for how to approach this important area going forward.

Risk assess:

- Continue to risk assess all your volunteer roles and all your spaces

Work with your volunteers:

- Continue to ask your volunteers to share the results of personal risk assessments based on their age, health status, ethnicity and other factors
- Continue to consult with and then update volunteers about your measures to reduce risk from Covid-19
- Discuss **mask wearing** with volunteers. Individuals may feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask, for example if they are in contact with vulnerable friends or relatives. Vulnerable volunteers should continue to wear masks and it may reduce their risk if the staff and volunteers who work with them do so as well. Emphasize that masks can be taken off if sitting in the same place to work or to eat.
- Take a clear stance on **testing and self-isolation**. Encourage volunteers to **not come into the museum with any Covid-19 symptom**: test if they develop symptoms; not to come in to volunteer if they then test positive – for 10 days or until day seven if they get a negative result on days 5 and 6. This is no longer a legal requirement but it is still encouraged to reduce transmission and protect the vulnerable.
- Encourage **regular testing** by the volunteer team, especially when one volunteer tests positive, so that new cases are picked up quickly
- Encourage volunteers to **get vaccinated or boosted**, if they haven't already done so. Whilst not suggesting you mandate this, we suggest you strongly advise it, in line with most non-healthcare settings.
- Encourage volunteers to consider regular [lateral flow testing](#) when going into the museum to volunteer.

Maintain preventative measures where practicable and in response to risk assessments:

- Consider visitor flow through your building and continue to operate number limits in confined spaces, especially if volunteers are based in these spaces
- Continue to look at ventilation and air filtration
- Maintain changes to roles to reduce risk for volunteers who may be in vulnerable groups – for example, the government recognises risk is higher for people with specific clinical conditions such as Down's syndrome, solid organ transplantation, Dementia, Parkinson's disease, and neurological conditions.
- Keep measures like Perspex screens in place for those roles that interact with the public, such as front desks.
- Ventilate where possible, doing this safely for collections and security, and/or consider using a HEPA filter in work spaces.
- Hand wash and clean touchpoints (surfaces that visitors touch, such as touchscreens or door handles).
- Continue to review measures for accessibility with different audiences and groups.

Support your **front-facing volunteers** to carry out their roles:

- Discuss as a team how you will respond if visitors express concerns – either about continued measures or reduced measures. Make sure you support front of house volunteers to understand and explain your approach and to follow good customer care principles in response to visitor comments.

For more information and guidance, see the government's advice for volunteering during Covid-19: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/enabling-safe-and-effective-volunteering-during-coronavirus-covid-19>.