Guide for Coordinators

Welcome

· ·

Welcome to Ireland's Neighbourhood Network!

First of all, thank you for offering your time to help your community. This crisis may be forcing us apart, but with Neighbourhood Network we can look after each other, together.

We're a network of neighbours and volunteers, ready and willing to support the at-risk members in our community during the COVID-19 crisis by providing groceries, medicine, fuel and run essential errands over the coming weeks and months. We are one person stronger thanks to you! The role of coordinators such as yourself is vital in this effort.

What is the Neighbourhood Network and why is it needed?

In response to Covid-19 and the announcement of the government's plan to cocoon 650k+ residents in their homes in the coming weeks, the network of neighbourhood support groups will ensure every single person who is self-isolating or cocooning is supported by their community.

Neighbourhood Network collaborates with other organisations and local initiatives (more on that below) to provide essentials like groceries and prescriptions to those in need. It's created to ensure that no one feels abandoned in their neighbourhoods and to build and inspire resilient communities.

Neighborhood Network's main goal is to help coordinate these goodwill efforts so that they are as effective as possible. This is a chance to build community, ensuring neighbours stay connected and supported.

If you already have a community group that is looking after neighbours, please send them the link to this group so they can join you on the platform.

Volunteers whose activity you will help coordinate will be able to easily apply through this platform. They will be the people on the ground in contact with neighbours needing support in their areas.

Overview - Being a Neighbourhood Network Area Coordinator

Time Commitment

Coordinating your area will take a few hours of your day. It is important that you have most of your time free.

Are You The Right Person?

▶ You wish to help your neighbours and the people who live near you

▶ You see an opportunity to strengthen your community during this current crisis

▶ You have time available during this crisis to organise your neighbourhood's efforts

▶ You have strong organisational, communication

Key steps to being a Neighbourhood Network Area Coordinator

What you have already done

- Register to be an area coordinator - Congratulations you have already done this
- Define your location - Make sure you have done this step too

What you still need to do

- Authenticate your account
- Get nearby volunteers onboard/recruit your team
- Knock on your neighbour's doors and drop a leaflet
- Get in touch with your local Garda station and Local Authority Community managers
- Task manage and assign volunteers tasks

1

Authenticate your account

As this role is a responsible one, we request a verification or reference from you. This can be submitted on the website. We'll follow up with a quick call to you and to your referee, and then you're all set to go.

2

Get nearby volunteers onboard / Recruit your team

Now it's time to spread the word so willing volunteers will join you. If you are part of a Public Participation Network or residents association, you'll already have a collection of trusted people to call upon. You can invite them to join your page. If you're creating a new group, try contacting one or two neighbours who can help you get started. Then get the word out there, share the link to your group and build your team.

3

Get in touch with your local Garda station and your Local Authority Community managers

Another key function you have to do as a Coordinator is to establish a connection with both the Garda station in your area and the community manager from the local Authority (you will find contacts to all Local Authorities in the Further Resources and Links document on this website). Gardai have assigned resources to the community response and can help you. It's also important that they are aware of your activities as they may be getting calls from people who are unsure if the leaflets they have received in their mailbox is legit.
The Local Authorities on the other hand are operating as call-centres, awaiting calls from people in need. It's important that they know of your group so they can send over relevant tasks to you. We advise that after you have established a connection with the community manager for your area, you can have a whatsapp conversation where they can easily send you a message about an incoming request, which you can then forward to your group (see below).

4

Knock on your neighbour's doors and drop a leaflet

We find the best way to reach out to neighbours is to knock on doors. You may think that making the trip up the garden path is very time consuming, but it makes a huge difference to the uptake of help. You may want to print out leaflets which can be handy in the case people aren't home, but remember, people are receiving so much Coronavirus information at the moment; it's very likely it won't be noticed. If you do decide to knock on people's doors, keep the Door Protocol in mind.

Task manage and assign volunteers tasks

This is the heart of your role as a Coordinator and involves categorising and assigning volunteers to teams, logging tasks, reporting the completion of tasks, and tracking any gaps. We'll have a new task-management system launching on Tuesday 7th April.

You can break up your area into small teams. Having piloted this effort in the Dublin 8 area, we have found the ideal to be three separate volunteers available to cover every few streets/ roads. This is to ensure backups are present if volunteers are unavailable.

Area coordinators may find it useful to create a general WhatsApp group for all volunteers in their area, and a separate Whatsapp group for each individual street/road group or encourage people to set one up. This has worked out really well in Stoneybatter.

The aim of these Whatsapp groups is to help coordinate and delegate tasks on a collective and individual level - as well as share important updates, tips, and health and safety regulations.

How to work with your volunteers

▶ As soon as someone signs up for the group, thank them for joining, introduce yourself and set expectations for what they can receive from you.

▶ Answer questions they may have or direct them to the FAQ for Volunteers page on this website.

▶ Explain the relevant policies and procedures.

▶ Thank volunteers frequently for the assistance that they are carrying out or offering.

▶ Aim to keep whatsapp chats to a minimum so that vital instructions can be seen quickly

▶ Offer words of encouragement and keep reiterating they should do this only if they are absolutely healthy and feel up for the task. There is no pressure from anyone.

How to distribute tasks among volunteers

▶ Respond to requests for help as efficiently, safely and quickly as possible

▶ Distribute tasks among volunteers as evenly as possible giving them as much information as you can for them to effectively proceed

▶ Take note of work that you and your volunteers do in the community if and where possible

IMPORTANT

As this is an evolving crisis and as guidance changes, keep an eye on The Department of Health/HSE updates which will identify any new public health guidance requirements and provide such guidance to volunteers.

Door protocol for coordinators & volunteers

Before being of any assistance to anyone, we will need to ensure that we do not do more harm than good and ensure that we are extra vigilant when following the HSE guidelines.

Do's

► Only volunteer if you are well enough to do so.
► Remember to keep social distancing in mind, always keep a space of two meters apart between you and the person.
► Carry photo ID at all times when visiting homes (opened at the appropriate page in a clear plastic bag) and offer it to be viewed. If you don't already know the person, be aware that they may have a natural anxiety in relation to strangers. This is to build up trust and make them feel as comfortable as possible.
► If in doubt as to the person's security or needs, call the Gardaí and ask them to check. They have extra resources to help those who are most in need, particularly those with limited local family or social support.
► Follow HSE guidelines around hand washing, sneezing and coughing (more below).

► Explain to elderly people why you are keeping a distance from them and that you're being cautious about not transmitting the virus to them. Be friendly and smile.
► If they have questions about contamination tell them to ring their GP if they develop symptoms (cough, fever, etc.) and through a doctor's referral, they can get tested
► Do make yourself aware of contact numbers for vital services and keep these numbers handy.
► Advise people to go on HSE.ie for health advice if an elderly person doesn't have access to the website, take their number and give them a ring from home while checking the HSE website from there, explain HSE protocol to them, help them find a GP number etc. all through the phone.

Donts

► Enter someone's home unless absolutely necessary. Dropping off shopping/prescription etc. can be left at the door and simply call to let them know.
► Hug or shake hands with vulnerable members of the community.

► Phone a vulnerable person or call to their door unannounced unless instructed to do so. This could cause undue anxiety and worry.

If delivering items from a supermarket or pharmacy, follow this procedure:

1

Wash your hands thoroughly before and after going to the shops. Bring wipes if you can to clean cartons down before delivering.

2

Put on disposable gloves while shopping and delivering if you have them but please note that this is NOT as a substitute for washing hands. Do not re-use gloves.

3

Items from supermarket: it is a good idea to advise elderly to briefly rinse or wipe containers (for instance, cartons of milk, medicine box, or tins) before using these. It can be a warm rinse under the tap or a wipe with wipes or with paper and cleaning spray. Viruses rarely stay long on clean dry surfaces. Make sure to advise them to clean hands after receiving deliveries and putting goods away.

4

Wash hands after handling cash. Be aware that cash can be a source of contamination. Ensure you advise the elderly to wash hands after handling cash and coins, especially the change you give them.

10

If you see that someone is in distress:

- ▶ Ask them if they want to call a doctor (their own GP for advice etc.) or if you should call an ambulance for them
- ▶ If you think the person is in a confused state and they may be unable to make a judgement call: call 999.

Wellbeing advice for coordinators

The COVID-19 crisis has brought out the very best in Irish people, who are demonstrating their willingness to help in whatever way possible. In order for this collective effort to be sustainable, it is extremely important for coordinators to balance such willingness with proper care of their own physical, mental and social wellbeing. We are all familiar with the safety message from air cabin crews to 'put your own oxygen mask on first' in an emergency. This puts you in a place of control allowing you to safely help the person that may be struggling to get their own mask in place. It is necessary to attach the same importance to your own mental health and wellbeing in any role you undertake as a coordinator. In these difficult times coordinator/volunteer burnout is a real risk factor, and if not managed it could lead to feelings of stress, anxiety or of just being overwhelmed.

Connect - maintain connection with the organisation with whom you are volunteering and debrief with them about your experience. Also connect in with your family and friends through phone calls and social media e.g. Facebook, WhatsApp, FaceTime, Instagram etc.

Be Active - identify a physical activity you enjoy and build in a level of activity that you can maintain; even a short stroll adhering to social distancing guidelines can be beneficial.

Take Notice - take a few moments out to check in on your own thoughts and feelings.

Keep Learning - taking up a new interest can be an excellent distraction while at the same time enhancing self- esteem and confidence. So in restricted conditions this could be trying out a new recipe, or researching a free online course or tutorial.

Give - as a volunteer you are already giving and enhancing the wellbeing of the person or community you are supporting. So now it is important that you give to yourself. Take time out to relax, listen to some favourite music, sit down and watch your favourite show.

How to wash your hands
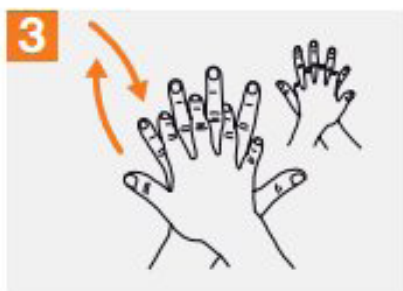
Wash hands thoroughly and as often as possible

Duration of the entire procedure: 20-30 seconds

1a Apply a palmful of the product in a cupped hand, covering all surfaces;

1b

2 Rub hands palm to palm;

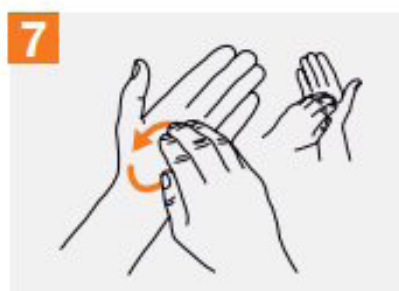**3** Right palm over left dorsum with interlaced fingers and vice versa;

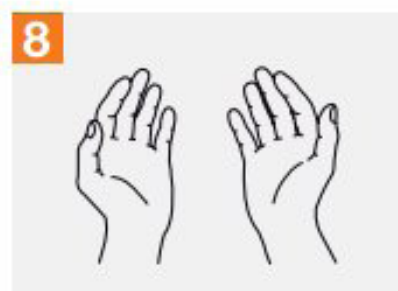**4** Palm to palm with fingers interlaced;

5 Backs of fingers to opposing palms with fingers interlocked;

6 Rotational rubbing of left thumb clasped in right palm and vice versa;

7 Rotational rubbing, backwards and forwards with clasped fingers of right hand in left palm and vice versa;

8 Once dry, your hands are safe.

www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html

Recognising The Symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19)

The main coronavirus symptoms include:
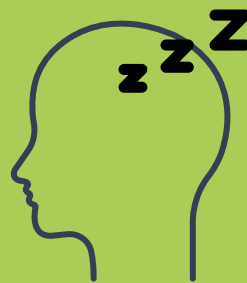
FEVER

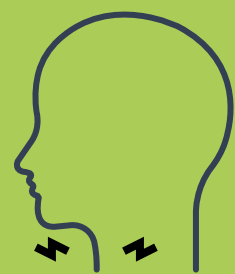Cough (usually dry)

Other possible symptoms may include

Shortness of breath

Headaches

Fatigue

Sore Throat

Symptoms can range from mild or severe

Key Contacts
(see also Further Resources and Links document)

HSE Number   1850 241 850

Senior Line   1800 804 591

ALONE   0818222024

We have an existing Whatsapp group for coordinators, let us know if you would like to be added to it.

Sources:
www.volunteer.ie
www.gov.ie
www.mentalhealthireland.ie
www.hse.ie

Other useful information

Ireland's Response to the Coronavirus Crisis:
https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a02c5a-what-is-happening/

Latest Updates on COVID-19 in Ireland:
https://www.gov.ie/en/news/7e0924-latest-updates-on-covid-19-coronavirus

Health Advice and Guidance:
https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/472f64-covid-19-coronavirus-guidance-and-advice/

The latest Government measures:
https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/cf9b0d-new-public-health-measures-effective-now-to-prevent-further-spread-o/

Social Welfare Advice:
https://www.gov.ie/en/campaigns/4cf0e2-covid-19-coronavirus-information-for-employers-and-employees-test/?referrer=/en/publication/0b6a34-advice-for-employers-and-employees/

Information from the World Health Organisation:
https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019

Neighbourhood network