



Keeping Safe when Volunteering – Dog Walking

Before you provide support to people who are in isolation you must be able to fulfil **ALL** of the conditions set out below:-

- You are well and have no symptoms and nor does anyone in your household e.g. a cough or high temperature
- You are aged 18 to 70 years old
- You are not pregnant
- You do not have any long-term health conditions that make you vulnerable to coronavirus.

REMEMBER you must not go inside anyone's home.

You should stay 2 meters or six feet away from anyone you do not live with at all times.

You must regularly wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser if you don't have access to handwashing facilities.

Your safety is our priority

Before picking up the dog:

- Call the owner to check the owner's circumstances, so you can both individually assess the situation and ensure that walking the dog that day is the correct action to take.
- Ask the owner to check the details on the collar are correct and where appropriate ensure contact details linked to the dog's microchip are up to date, so that it gets returned home as soon as possible if lost.
- Check if the dog has any allergies, medical or behavioural issues, so you know how best to exercise it safely.
- Put the telephone number of the vets where the dog is registered in your phone.
- Ask the owner what commands the dog knows, such as to sit, walk to heel and come back - using the right words will make the walk easier and less stressful for you both.
- Ask the owner to make sure the dog's collar is not too loose, as otherwise it could back out of it, if scared on the walk.
- Ask the owner to ensure the lead is on the dog ready for when you arrive.
- Agree a time and ideally the route in advance.
- Agree how you will safely collect and return the dog securely, in a way that maintains a 2 metre distance between you and the other person. Can the dog be tied to a post on your arrival by its owner and then collected from there?
- If you are unsure if you or the dog will be safe, do not undertake the walk that day.
- If you feel you are unable to walk the dog safely or have any concerns – you don't have to undertake the task.

When collecting the dog:

- Do not let the dog 'kiss' you or other dogs and avoid contact with other people's pets

Maintain social distancing measures and always wash your hands before and after handling the dog. Use hand sanitiser if you don't have access to handwashing facilities.

- Ensure collecting the dog is done in the pre-agreed way. Do not enter the owner's home.
- Do not share a dog whistle.
- Do not touch your face, eyes or mouth until you are able to wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitiser if you don't have access to handwashing facilities.
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- If you feel you are unable to walk the dog safely or have any concerns – you don't have to undertake the task

When on the walk:

- Keep at least 2 metres apart from anyone outside your household at all times.
- Do not give the dog treats.
- Do not let the dog off the lead.
- Avoid popular times and places so you can keep at least 2 metres from other people and dogs.
- Walk locally and don't travel unnecessarily.
- Don't let any dog play with sticks and avoid the use of toys.
- Always thoroughly wash your hands with soap and water after handling any dog, toys, treats, leads, harnesses etc.
- Always pick up the dog's poo, there are plenty of dog poo/waste bins available to dispose of poo bags and these should be used where possible. If not possible, take the bagged poo home and place in your general waste.
- Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as you get home.
- If you feel that it becomes unsafe or you have any concerns whilst walking the dog – return the dog to the owner.

When returning the dog:

- Ensure returning the dog is done at the pre-agreed time and that you maintain a 2 metre distance from people.
- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water as soon as you get back to your home.
- If you felt unsafe, uncomfortable or had any concerns whilst walking the dog, speak to the owner and also report any issues to the volunteer organiser
- If you have any concerns about an individual you are supporting please report back to the community support helpline on 01952 382030. In an emergency call 999.

Is Personal Protective Equipment needed?

In line with Government guidance, we do not recommend the use of face masks as an effective means of preventing the spread of infection in a non-clinical setting. Hand washing and social distancing are the effective controls currently in place and recommended by the Government. If this advice changes we will update this notice.

Gloves are also not necessary, as good hand washing and regular use of alcohol based hand sanitisers offer effective protection. Gloves can still carry germs and can still infect you if you touch your face whilst wearing them.