

# Personal safety checklist for volunteers

Your personal safety when volunteering is a priority. We assess the risks involved in your volunteering activities and provide you with training, guidance, procedures, and support, as required for your role. You are expected to always follow our procedures, as well as take responsibility for your personal safety while volunteering.

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## Key information

- We never want you to take any unnecessary risks when volunteering. Always trust your instincts and do not put yourself in a risky situation. If you encounter a situation in your volunteering that appears or feels unsafe, we ask you to leave the situation as quickly and safely as you can and inform Lymphoma Action as soon as possible.
- Keep your volunteer manager informed of any health or support needs you have, so we can review your volunteer activities and take any necessary steps to support you, including carrying out an individual risk assessment.
- Your volunteer manager should always be aware of your volunteering activities, including location, dates, times and any travel arrangements, and any changes to them.
- Your volunteer role may mean that you carry out activities on your own, without the presence of Lymphoma Action staff and/or other volunteers. Please refer to our [Lone volunteering procedure](#) for information about volunteering on your own.
- Lymphoma Action does not tolerate harassment or abuse of our volunteers during your activities. Should you experience anything of this nature, speak with your volunteer manager as soon as possible.
- Please report all accidents or incidents during your volunteering to your volunteer manager as soon as possible – we have an [Incident report form](#).

## Support available to volunteers

Your volunteer manager is there to support you during the course of your volunteering. Please speak with them, or the Volunteering Development Manager, if you have any concerns or questions about staying safe while volunteering.

In the unlikely event that you should you experience an incident or situation during your volunteering, we are here to offer you support and you also have the opportunity to speak with a Lymphoma Action Mental Health First Aider.

## Checklist

The following checklist offers information and reminders for staying safe, designed to help you think about your own safety.

## Staying safe online

### Cyber security

Be aware and vigilant of digital security and possible threats, such as phishing emails and malicious software:

- Check that you have adequate and up-to-date online security.
- Use strong and different passwords for your accounts using three random words.
- Install the latest software and application updates on your devices as soon as they are available. These updates offer protection from viruses and other kinds of malware, as well as including new features and making improvements.
- Turn on **2-Step Verification** (2SV) for your email and other online accounts as this provides twice the protection. Cyber criminals will be unable to access your accounts, even if they obtain your password.
- Be alert for phishing emails. Do not click any links or provide any information if you feel it's suspicious.
  - Check emails that look as though they come from Lymphoma Action staff and/or other volunteers but seem off.
  - Think about if it looks like the sort of email you'd normally receive from your volunteer manager or the Volunteering Team, and the email address that it's been sent from.
  - Contact us over the phone to check it is legitimate and not spam.
- Always alert your volunteer manager or the Volunteering Team of any suspicious activity.
- When using social media for your volunteering activities, it's your responsibility to review your account privacy settings as you may wish to limit who can see your information. Please refer to our [Social media guidance for volunteers](#).

## Interacting with others

- Lymphoma Action does not tolerate online abuse of our volunteers in the course of your activities. Should you experience anything of this nature, speak with your volunteer manager as soon as possible and avoid further interactions with the person(s) involved.
- If you receive an email connected with your volunteering that you find offensive or in any way improper, intimidating or threatening, tell your volunteer manager straight away.
- Protect your own security and privacy by not giving out your personal contact details in relation to your volunteering. Instead, you could:
  - Provide Lymphoma Action's office number (01296 619400) and the [volunteering@lymphoma-action.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@lymphoma-action.org.uk) email address.
  - Discuss with your volunteer manager about providing their Lymphoma Action contact number and email address.
  - Offer to call the person instead, making sure to turn off your 'caller ID' on your smart phone or dial 141 before their number to hide your own.
  - We can provide a Lymphoma Action email address for some volunteering roles - please ask your volunteer manager about this.
- Lymphoma Action has a branded virtual background available for volunteers to use during your online volunteering activities, or you can use the 'blur' background option.

## Staying safe when volunteering from home

- Never tell anyone you contact in the course of your volunteering that you are volunteering alone or live alone.
- Where arranging or attending meetings and events as part of your volunteer role (as discussed during your induction), do not invite anyone into your home – these must take place by phone, online or in a public place, such as a cafe.

## Preparing for your volunteering activity (external locations)

- We encourage you to leave valuables at home, other than anything required for the activity and your personal safety.
- Check that you have your mobile phone and charger and leave it switched on in case Lymphoma Action, your nominated contact or the event organiser need to get in contact with you.
- If your activity involves you taking part alone without the support of Lymphoma Action staff, please refer to our [Lone volunteering procedure](#).

## Assessing your surroundings

During your volunteering activity, including when travelling, stay alert and aware of your surroundings by identifying any hazards or concerns you have. This will help you quickly decide how safe a situation is and what action you should take to avoid any possible risk or danger.

- Trust your instincts and leave the situation if you do not feel safe.
- Consider an exit strategy - take note of exit routes in case you need to leave quickly.
- Always be aware of the possibility that somebody might not be who they say they are. Depending on the nature of your role, make sure you have the details of the person you're meeting to hand, for example, job title, contact information, organisation, or department, so you can ask questions to confirm who they are.

## Travelling for your volunteering activity

Your volunteering activities may include travelling to and from an event, attending meetings or training sessions.

Although Lymphoma Action's [Expenses information](#) outlines that volunteer travel expenses should be claimed at the most economical rate, your safety is paramount, so always consider the safest travel method for you. This includes factoring in the weather, time of day and your knowledge of the area.

While your volunteer manager will provide as much information as possible, you will be expected to do some research, especially as you're likely to have a better idea of your local area and travel options.

- **Planning:**
  - If you're visiting somewhere new, you could test out the route beforehand (if it's local to you and practically possible).
  - We recommend using Google Street View to help you better identify the venue on the day, as well as plan where to park and the access routes.
  - Travel should be avoided when the weather is bad and it presents a risk to safety, for example, ice or snow. You must inform your volunteer manager as soon as possible, and anyone else you were due to meet, that you are unable to attend.
  - If you are taking any equipment required for the activity, such as a laptop or projector, collection tin or cashbox, keep these out of sight so that they are not on show while travelling, including going to and from a car park.
- **When driving:**
  - Make sure that your vehicle is roadworthy, has breakdown cover and sufficient fuel. It is your responsibility to have appropriate insurance and a valid licence.
  - If there is no car parking available, try to park as close to the location you are visiting, and in a well-lit area.
- **When walking:**
  - Avoid deviating from your route through shortcuts, even if you are in a hurry.
  - Avoid poorly lit, isolated areas, especially at night.
  - Avoid using your mobile phone when walking in isolated areas, especially at night.
  - Keep valuables out of sight, particularly if you are transporting fundraising money.
  - Consider asking someone you know to meet you and walk with you.

- **When taking public transport:**

- Think about purchasing your tickets in advance so you do not have to - you could purchase smartphone tickets.
- Download the transport timetable, or note down a variety of departure times, so that you can plan your journey and you are not waiting around too long.
- Wait for transport at a busy stop or station, in a well-lit area.
- Keep valuables out of sight, particularly if you are transporting fundraising money.

In the case of an emergency, and you need to get into someone else's car, or you need to take someone in your car, always let someone else know (such as your volunteer manager, a family member or friend) who you are with.

## Overnight stay

Where your volunteer activity may involve staying overnight as pre-agreed with your volunteer manager, check in advance that you are comfortable with the location of the hotel. Websites such as Tripadvisor may highlight safety concerns that may have been flagged in guest reviews.

In some cases, your volunteer manager will be booking the accommodation. Raise any concerns you may have about your safety with them as soon as possible.

## Handling money

If you're attending a fundraising related activity, please read our [Cash handling and fundraising guidance](#) that covers staying safe when collecting and transporting money.

## Managing challenging situations

If you experience a challenging situation or a conflict arises during your volunteering activity:

- Even if you feel confident trying to de-escalate the situation, your own safety comes first - you are not expected to put yourself at risk.
- Avoid confrontation – remain calm and show that you are taking the person's concerns seriously and give them space to back down.
- Avoid body language that could be viewed as confrontational - pointing, raised arms.
- You are within your rights to bring any activity to an end and seek assistance straight away.
- You should leave any situation if you feel you are in danger – it may be safer for you to leave than ask another person to leave. Head to where you know people are and shout for help.
- If you are asked to hand over money or valuables, please do not resist or take any action.
- If there is an emergency, or there is immediate danger, always contact the emergency services on 999. Please then report it to your volunteer manager as soon as possible.
- Always carry a mobile phone so that you can call for help quickly. Make sure you have the numbers saved for your volunteer manager and the Lymphoma Action office (01296 619400).