

## How to make Keeping in Touch calls

### Guidance

Keeping In Touch calls are intended to provide people with contact while isolating and to offer them a chance to indicate or raise concerns. You will contact members individuals to ascertain how they are managing during the COVID-19 crisis and reassure them of continued contact and/or referral to organisations that may be able to help with existing or developing issues.

The Keeping in Touch calls are intended to last around 15 minutes. The objective of the call is to ask how the individual is managing and to allow them to talk and/or describe their situation. The calls are intended to last around 15 minutes but on occasions the calls may be longer. The volunteer should try to identify existing and/or developing issues which may require monitoring or referring/signposting to specialist services. The role is strictly to establish a relationship for checking on an individual's wellbeing and is not a befriending role which may create a personal dependency between the individual and the volunteer.

You should not promise things that are outside of your remit. For instance, if you are scheduled to call the beneficiary once a week and they are asking for you to call them 2/3 times a week or every day then you should refer back to the Welfare Support team so that they can review needs and consider additional support requirements for the individual.

You should not be giving your personal telephone number to beneficiaries and you should not offer support to them outside of your role eg call them outside of the agreed arrangements or popping out to do shopping for them. It is important that the beneficiary does not become dependent on you and you should try and enable them to remain as independent as possible. Where they need that additional support we will link them to services and organisations that can offer them ongoing longer-term support. It is not the volunteer's role to resolve the issue personally, but rather to record so that our Welfare Support team are aware and can work with the individual to ensure that their needs are met.

Please regularly visit <https://mywellbeing.community> to check for guidance. Make sure you have read our guidance on dementia awareness, mental health awareness and safeguarding.

### When making the calls below, please bear in mind:

- While we expect volunteers to be kind and courteous, this is not a befriending service – calls are intended to last up to 15 minutes with a further 5 minutes to update using the Volunteering App.
- Please give people every opportunity to raise concerns.
- Please speak to the individual and get an idea of whether they would prefer a call in the morning, afternoon or early evening – depending on your availability of course.
- You can use the Referral Requested feature of the App to tell us that you've been unable to establish contact. There might be many reasons for this - please let us know and we will investigate.
- If you do establish contact, you can use the Referral Requested feature to request a referral for: an urgent food parcel, an urgent prescription delivery, a regular food delivery, a regular prescription delivery, a concern you have about a person's physical or mental wellbeing, about poverty, about their living environment, or about safeguarding.
- If you make a Referral Request, we will follow up on the request – usually by speaking to the person to confirm their needs, and then making a referral to a specialist agency.
- If you think there is a medical or life-threatening emergency, always call 999.

- You may find it hard to communicate with some individuals – they may have hearing issues or perhaps English is not their first language. Always record this in your notes so that we can make sure that they receive the right support from us.
- If you are unsure about a what to do with a request that you have received, then please let our team know. They will be available to answer your queries Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm and on weekends and bank holidays from 10am to 4pm. You can reach the team by email at [volunteering@w3rt.org](mailto:volunteering@w3rt.org) or by phone on 01923 216962.

### Framework for delivering Keeping in Touch calls

Please try to cover these areas, but keep it as relaxed and conversational as possible. We do not want the individual to feel like they are being interviewed. A formal or 'tick box' approach will result in them feeling less comfortable about sharing concerns with you.

1. Hello. My name is [give your name] and I am a volunteer for Watford & Three Rivers Trust. They have asked me to give you a "Keeping in Touch" call to see if you're ok. After our call I will let them know how things went and may tell them of any help I think you need, is that ok? [If you're asked, tell them that Watford & Three Rivers trust is a registered charity working with the NHS and local government to support people through the current government restrictions.]
2. How are you feeling today? I have to ask if you have any symptoms you're concerned about?
3. How are you coping with staying at home?
4. Does anyone live there with you?
5. Do you feel comfortable and able to cope?
6. Are you able to get out for regular exercise?
7. Do you have people living with you, or family or friends that you talk with regularly?
8. If you're on any medication, are you able to collect your prescriptions?
9. Do you understand the Government's guidance as it applies to you?
10. Are you able to buy enough food and groceries and prepare your meals ok?
11. Do you have any questions or concerns you want to share?
12. Is it ok to call again?

### Things to consider

- Be warm and welcoming - remember that your tone of voice can express your feelings, even if you don't want it to.
- Keep questions simple and to the point. If you ask multiple questions at the same time then the individual may become confused and only answer the last question you asked.
- Listen so that you understand the situation from the individual's point of view.
- Be genuinely interested in what they are saying and be sincere in the way you communicate with them.
- Empathise – try and understand their feelings and what it is like for them to be experiencing this situation.
- Often the individual may be very open with you about their health issues and other difficulties that they are experiencing, such as the loss of a loved one. It is ok to acknowledge and respond to this. You might say something like, 'I'm sorry to hear that, how sad' or 'I'm sorry to hear that, that must be very difficult'.
- Value and respect what the individual has said even if you do not agree.
- Understand that often the first issue an individual brings up is often not the main issue.

- Summarise what the individual has said to you so that you can confirm your understanding is correct – this will give them an opportunity to clarify any points.
- Try and make your calls in a quiet room so that you can hear the individual clearly and you are not distracted.
- Always allow enough time to make the call so that the conversation is not rushed and that you can update your notes in the App.

### Your welfare

Please keep us updated if your circumstances change so that we can update our records. If you are unwell or your caring responsibilities mean that you need to take a break from volunteering, please let us know. When notifying us of changes such as this we will offer to provide you with a wellbeing call to make sure that you are ok and help identify any support that you might need – we are here to help.