



VOLUNTEER RESPONDER INFORMATION AND GUIDELINES

(Version 1)

Dear responder, very many thanks for volunteering to help at this difficult time. Our aim is to provide support to people in the Bear Flat area who are self-isolating and having problems, either in getting supplies – shopping, medicines – or who just need to talk to someone.

Here is some information and guidelines.

THE RESPONSE PROCESS.

The helpline leaflet has been distributed to everyone in Bear Flat – if you become aware of addresses being missed out, then let us know on the COVID email address and we'll arrange one to be delivered.

We have compiled a table of all of you, the volunteer **responders**, including name, address, telephone number, email address and any specific information that you have given (eg 'no car', or 'self-isolating but happy to talk').

We are arranging a number of people to act as **co-ordinators** answering the helpline telephone number or emergency email

When a helpline request comes in, the coordinator will take details and contact a responder from the list. Ideally this will be a responder who is geographically close to the caller. The coordinator will pass on details of the request to the responder. If the responder is unable to provide assistance at that time, someone else on the list will be contacted. If the caller just wants to talk, the coordinator will choose a responder who has offered to do this.

THIS PROCESS REQUIRES THAT ALL VOLUNTEERS AGREE TO THEIR CONTACT DETAILS BEING MADE AVAILABLE TO THE CO-ORDINATORS. Please let us know if you are unable to agree to this. We'll assume you agree unless we hear from you.

The following discussion assumes that the responder is YOU.

GUIDELINES ON RESPONDING

Your own safety is paramount. Please do not put yourself in harm's way. Do not enter the caller's house and keep a minimum of two metres distance at the doorstep. Take whatever protective measures you feel most comfortable with, eg gloves, face-mask, hand sanitisers.

If, when you arrive, someone in the house is **experiencing a medical emergency**, RING 999 for assistance before doing anything else. We recommend that you wait for the ambulance rather than entering the house to help, but obviously that must be a personal decision. Unless you are a medical professional, please do not offer medical advice but ask the caller to ring 111.

Shopping. If the caller needs supplies (food, medicines, other essentials) then the coordinator receiving the call will ask what is needed and how payment will be made. The coordinator can then email you with the information.

Payment is a tricky area. Hopefully the caller wants a pre-paid order collected, in which case payment issues don't arise, but this may not always be the case. If you know the caller personally, then a payment arrangement between you may be appropriate. In the absence of these situations, then:

- We recommend that you pay in the first instance and the caller provides funds via **bank transfer**. This avoids any physical contact. The coordinator will have noted that the caller has agreed to pay by bank transfer, and so there will be an independent record of the agreement. You will obviously have to provide your bank details to the caller for this to take place.
- The caller may be happy to give their debit or credit card to you, to be used as **contactless payment**. Again, a record of this agreement can be kept by the coordinator. If you are advised by the coordinator that this is the method of payment, then please make sure you have wipes to clean the card when you take it from and return it to the caller.
- **Cash is not acceptable**. There is evidence now that the virus can persist on metal for a long time and therefore you should not accept coins from (or return coins to) the caller. **Payment by cheque** should be safe, though we recommend wearing protective gloves on collection and leaving the cheque for a few hours before handling it with bare hands.
- In the exceptional circumstance that the caller has no access to online banking, has no card and has no cheques, then an arrangement will be made for the BFA to cover the cost to you.

We strongly recommend that you get a receipt for any payments made, take a copy (camera phone) and hand the receipt over with the goods.

Talking. Some people may just want to talk. Some volunteers have said that this is the help they would like to provide. The coordinator will prioritise these volunteers for talking.

If you receive any **verbal abuse** from a caller, please call the COVID number and tell the coordinator.

IF YOU DEVELOP SYMPTOMS

If you develop COVID-like symptoms, then please let us know as soon as possible. You may wish to continue supplying a talk service but otherwise we will take you off the responders list. Once you have come through the illness and you decide you would like to re-join the list, then please contact us again.

Once again, thank you for volunteering for this important service.

Bear Flat Association

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