

NHS Volunteer Responders

Fact sheet for Third Sector

The NHS Volunteer Responders scheme (NHSVR) has been established by NHS England and is being delivered by Royal Voluntary Service and enabled by the GoodSAM app. Its aim is to provide volunteer support to those most at risk to COVID 19 to help them stay safe at home while isolating from the virus. This scheme is operating across England.

Since launching, the scheme has brought on-board over 600,000 approved volunteers offering help to their local communities while protecting the NHS.

What are the NHS Volunteer Responder roles?

There are currently four types of volunteer roles:

- **Community Response volunteer:** volunteers to collect and deliver shopping, medication or other essential supplies for patients who are shielding.
 - **Community Response volunteer Plus (Coming Soon):** volunteers to collect and deliver shopping, medication or other essential supplies for patients with cognitive impairments and or significant vulnerabilities who are shielding.
- **Patient Transport volunteer:** volunteers to provide transport to patients who are ready for discharge, to ensure that they are settled safely back into their homes or to support essential attendance at medical appointments.
- **NHS Transport volunteer:** volunteers to transport equipment, supplies and/or medication between NHS services and sites. It may also involve assisting pharmacies with medication delivery. This role can also help Local Resilience Networks with transportation and delivery of items such as food parcels.
- **Check in and Chat volunteer:** volunteers to provide telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness and becoming disconnected.

To support the NHSVR Scheme we have also commissioned a Call Centre that supports enquiries from referrers and volunteers. This is now fully operationalised and therefore is in place to support an expansion of the referral routes.

In addition, we have a Safeguarding Team that are fully operational who work with the referrers, volunteers and clients to ensure that all safeguarding concerns are investigated and resolved.

What is the referral criteria?

The service has been established to support those most at risk to COVID 19. Volunteer help can be offered where individuals meet the qualifying criteria provided by NHS England and where these individuals can benefit from the volunteer roles on offer. Those requiring volunteer support can either self-refer into the system or via approved referrers.

There are two routes for your clients to access the system

Route One

Those that have been told to self-isolate or 'shield' via a letter directly from the NHS can be referred by the approved referral partners listed below;

- NHS Professional
- Pharmacist
- 111
- Local Authority /Social care for example (Resilience Fora)

This is a simple, straightforward online process which will continue.

Alternatively, if any of this NHS patient group who have a letter from the NHS wish to self-refer, they can do so by calling the Call Centre on **0808 196 3646** where we will process their request for support.

Route Two

An expansion of the scheme has been developed and is governed by the additional criteria set out below. This is a self-referral process only. Patients and clients should phone the call centre on **0808 196 3646** where we will process their direct request for support.

This criteria is provided to assist you in your decision to encourage your clients to refer themselves to the service;

- People aged 70 years and older with underlying health conditions

People with high-risk conditions to include:

- People with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- People who have serious heart conditions
- People who are immunocompromised including cancer treatment
- People of any age with severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] >40)
- Certain underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, such as those with diabetes, dementia, renal failure, or liver disease.
- People who are pregnant
- People who are newly socially vulnerable as a result of Covid 19 and would benefit from one of the 4 volunteer roles.
- People who are registered disabled

How do you make referrals if you are an approved referral partner?

Approved partners who have been with the scheme from the beginning are able to refer into the scheme via the NHS Volunteer Responders Referrer's portal. At this time the four following partners are approved: NHS professionals, Pharmacists, 111, Local Authorities/Social Care (Resilience Fora).

How to make a referral if you are referring yourself?

Individuals needing support can self-refer if they think they meet the qualifying criteria. They can do this by phoning the call centre on **0808 196 3646**.

How do other organisations who are not one of the four approved referral partners refer their patients/clients to use NHS Volunteer Responders?

Third sector organisations/charities can promote the self-referral route to their patients/clients. This helps us comply with GDPR by ensuring the patient/client gives their own consent for use and involvement within the scheme.

If you feel that one of your clients/patients meet the criteria and would benefit from a Volunteer Responders support we are asking you to encourage them to use the self-referral process as outlined above.

We are currently exploring opportunities to increase the approved referrer list with charities that have a close tie or condition specific remit that aligns to the criteria. We will update this Fact Sheet on a regular basis as there are more developments with the NHSVR Scheme.

What do I do if I want to raise an issue or concern?

Concerns can be raised by calling the Support Team (**0808 196 3382**) who will deal with your enquiry

Thank you for your interest in NHS Volunteer Responder Scheme.