**Keeping Safe During Covid-19** 6th January 2021

It is not possible to completely eliminate the risk – of covid-19 or otherwise. However, we have prepared these guidelines to help you to minimise the risk of infection to volunteers or family members.

This is not an exhaustive list of guidelines - you may have other great ideas to keep safe. Please do share any ideas you have, as we are always learning and evolving together.

**Some general rules:**

1. The government has permitted people to volunteer throughout lockdown restrictions - but wherever possible, this should be done remotely.
2. Never break Covid restrictions and guidelines. This is always important – but especially so, as the family will follow your example.
3. Always wear a face covering, maintain a 2m distance, wash hands regularly, and never leave the house if you are required to self-isolate.
4. No work should be carried out in a household which is isolating because one or more family members has symptoms or where an individual has been advised to shield - unless it is to remedy a direct risk to the safety of the household.
5. Avoid any direct face-to-face contact, for example, when answering the door.
6. Introduce fixed pairing of volunteers where possible.

**Managing Volunteers:**

1. No-one should ever feel pressured to volunteer
2. Plan how you will communicate covid-safe restrictions to volunteers and family members, and provide updates of any change.
3. Assign someone in the group who will keep a record of who has been in contact with whom while volunteering.
4. If anyone tests positive for covid-19, they must inform this person (let’s call them the “Test and Trace Officer”). The Officer must then contact anyone who has been in contact with them. All persons must follow guidelines on self-isolation.
5. Wherever possible, arrange activities to be remote (for example, group meetings should remain online for the foreseeable future)
6. If it is absolutely necessary to volunteer outside the home, make sure that you follow guidelines below, and do a risk assessment (we have provided an example)
7. Consider who in the group is particularly at risk (e.g. over 70, clinically vulnerable). Are there additional precautions they can take, to avoid contact with others?
8. We generally recommend that you should visit the family in pairs at the beginning – this is safer for both the family and volunteers. To minimise household mixing, we recommend that you put people into fixed pairs.
9. Have more volunteers on stand-by, in the event that people have to self-isolate.

**Preparing the House**

1. Follow local restrictions. At the time of writing, you should only have one household in the house at a time.
2. If your local area later allows household mixing indoors, we recommend that you still work in separate rooms.
3. Leave anti-bacterial wipes or similar in the house, to allow people to wipe surfaces.
   * Wipe all surfaces before and after you use a shared tool.
   * Wipe down all surfaces you have touched before you leave (inc. light switches, door handles, taps, key, etc.) You may want to add a post-it/sticker on common touchpoints as a reminder).
4. Open the windows regularly, to keep air ventilated.
5. Bring your own food and drink, crockery, and utensils
6. Have breaks outside where possible
7. Wash your hands regularly
8. There may be times where you need two people for a job – for example, lifting heavy furniture. If possible, assign these jobs to a household group who can do this together. If this is not possible, ensure that you wear a mask, and wash your hands before and after. Try to keep people in the same pairs throughout, to minimize household mixing.

**Before the family arrive:**

Take a look at Section Four of the Community Sponsorship Portal for a guide of what to do before the family arrive: <https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/courses/enrolled/1033077>

(You can set up a group account here: <https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/p/community_sponsorship>)

**Some additional considerations during Covid-19:**

**Healthcare:** Find out the current registration process at the GP and Dentist – can this be done remotely? Can you book an appointment in advance? Will the appointment be by telephone? Will they provide interpreters? Does the family have any medical needs that need to be addressed immediately?

**Universal Credit:** Get familiar with the Universal Credit application process. This will now be done online. Several days later, the DWP will arrange an online call or face to face meeting. You can get support from Citizens Advice if necessary: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/helptoclaim/>

**Bank Account:** Get familiar with the process of setting up a bank account. We recommend that you use [Monzo](https://monzo.com/), as this can be set up by mobile phone as soon as the family receive their BRPs.

**Education:** School and ESOL registration processes may have changed – find out the new process.

**Volunteers & Interpreters:** Arrange your rota of volunteers and interpreters. Where possible, introduce fixed pairings. A silver-lining of working remotely, is that you can involve interpreters who are not local to you.

**Internet:** Make sure that the family will have access to internet in the house and a device to access this.

**Information & Welcome Pack:** Ensure you have a welcome pack ready – this should now include information about covid-19 restrictions, and plenty of hand-sanitiser, face-masks and cleaning products.

**Going to the airport:**

1. Although it is disappointing, only bring as many people as absolutely necessary. We suggest that 2-3 people, inc. a translator is sufficient.
2. The people who will be going to the airport should limit contact with other people before and after this visit as much as possible.
3. Arranging Transport:
   * Is it possible to hire a vehicle large enough to stay 1-2m apart (e.g. a large minivan?)
   * Can you use contactless or online payment?
   * Can team members from different households travel to the airport in separate vehicles?
   * Would it be possible for the family to travel back in a separate vehicle from the volunteers? If so, can you explain what will happen (e.g. length of journey, what to do if they need the toilet), so that they feel at ease?
4. Ensure the family have a chance to use the toilets before you get into the van and are provided with water and snacks. This will limit the need to stop at services during the journey
5. Remember child car-seats if necessary.
6. In the car/van:
   * Be aware of surfaces you touch. Bring anti-bacterial wipes to wipe surfaces
   * Keep mask on at all times
   * Cover mouth and nose with tissue if sneezing.
   * Use hand sanitzer regularly
   * Keep a window open to allow ventilation

**Once you arrive at the house:**

1. Make sure the house is well ventilated.
2. Show the family around the house – how to use appliances, wifi, heating, how to lock doors, any rules (e.g. no smoking, bin days and waste separation)
3. Show them how to use online video calling, so that they can use this for the rest of the isolation period.
4. Explain your plan for the next two weeks – including how you will deliver groceries.
5. Explain how to call emergency services and how to contact the group
6. Provide all up-to-date Covid-19 information and restrictions to the family straight away – verbally and written – with picture diagrams. This should include:
   * + What they can and cannot do
     + Mandatory 10-day Self-isolation period
     + Symptoms of covid-19
     + What to do if someone develops symptoms
     + How and where to get a test (remember that if they get a test, the instructions are written in English, so you they may need to be on a phone call with a translator during the test)
     + How to get medical help (remind them that the NHS is still running, and they can still get medical help if necessary).
     + Any additional measures you have in place as a group

**The first ten days:**

You can find a list of things you will need to cover during the first weeks on Section Five of our Community Sponsorship portal, here: <https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/courses/enrolled/1033065>

(You can set up a group account for the portal here: <https://citizens-uk.teachable.com/p/community_sponsorship>)

**Some additional considerations:**

1. Croeso Teifi have produced an example timetable of the first two weeks – see appendix A.
2. It is even more important to arrange registration with a doctor immediately.
3. Arrange activities through online calls (such as Zoom) wherever possible.
4. There are a few things that may not be possible to achieve through a Zoom call. For example, we imagine that setting up a bank account with Monzo will be very difficult, as it requires the family to be able to read the English instructions. In such cases, you might be able to arrange to stand on the front porch, maintaining a 2m distance, to do this with the family. (remember, if you are touching their mobile, make sure that you use anti-bacterial wipes and hand-sanitizer before and after use).
5. There may be additional delays to getting universal credit, so make sure you have enough budget to provide additional money if necessary.
6. How will you provide the £200 per family member? You may want to transfer a lot of this to their bank account, since most places now prefer online/contactless payments.

Test to release scheme:

In England it is possible to pay for a private test after 5 full days of isolation. If everyone tests negative, they can stop self-isolation. It is for the group to decide how you spend your funds, but we don’t recommend this option. It is about £150 per person for this test, and results can take about 2 days to come back – so you would only release the family 2-3 days earlier than the necessary 10 days.

If you do decide to do a test-to-release scheme, you will need to inform the Home Office/IOM in advance, as this will need to be written on their form to come to the UK.

**Once the self-isolation period is over**

Once again, we direct you to the Community Sponsorship Portal, for a list of things you will need to have in place (such as school registrations, etc.).

**Some additional considerations:**

1. Are there places you can recommend for them to go for a walk/exercise?
2. Are there particularly crowded places that you recommend that the family avoid?
3. If they need to travel, what is the safest mode of transport? Should you consider getting a bike donated, so that they can avoid buses?
4. How will you safely introduce the family to the neighbourhood, including shops and transport?
5. It is much harder to notice or address safeguarding concerns when you are working remotely. Remember to stay alert to concerns.

**Volunteering inside the family home:**

After the first day, you should not enter the family home during their self-isolation period. The only reason to enter their home is to protect them from a direct risk.

After this, you should only go inside the house if it is absolutely necessary. If you do go into the house, follow these guidelines:

1. Ask the family to keep internal doors open, so that you don’t have to touch door handles
2. Always wear a face covering
3. Always remain 2m apart
4. If you must mix households; can you “bubble up”, so that people volunteer with the same person each time. This will limit the number of contacts you each have.
5. Always keep windows and doors open for ventilation (even if it is cold!)
6. Keep a timeline of who has been in contact with whom. If someone tests positive for Covid-19, they must inform your “Test and Trace Officer”, so that all contacts can be notified.
7. Avoid sharing items such as pens or tools
8. Although it is often natural for people to want to offer hospitality, sharing of cups, etc. can increase risk of spreading, and you should not be visiting inside the home for longer than is necessary.
9. Once restrictions relax, and allow you to stay for tea, consider bringing your own cups, and sitting outside.
10. If someone needs to come into the house to fix something, ask the family to stay in a separate room.

**Volunteer Self-Care:**

Volunteers are responsible for understanding these guidelines and keeping themselves and others safe.

It is understandable that you may feel disappointed by these restrictions – you have been preparing for this moment for a long time, and likely were excited for the moment you meet the family at the airport or take them around their new neighbourhood. Perhaps you are feeling afraid or anxious about volunteering in these circumstances. Some groups are holding calls together to have a space to talk about your disappointment or fears.

We recommend that you hold regular peer-to-peer calls online, to check in with each other, and provide a space to talk confidentially about challenges, fears, or frustrations. It might be that important safeguarding concerns arise during these discussions, so it is good to include your DSL.

Sponsor Refugees will also be holding a fortnightly drop-in call for all groups who have welcomed a family in this cohort, so that you can share innovative ideas or challenges together.

**Government Guidelines for Volunteering during Covid-19:**

England: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/enabling-safe-and-effective-volunteering-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Wales: <https://gov.wales/volunteering-during-coronavirus-pandemic>

**Appendix A: Example Timetable from Croeso Teifi**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Day** | **11.00am - Garden wall visits** | **3.00 pm - Zoom sessions** |
| **1** | M + N and family.  B (interpreter) | Topic – The Welcome Pack.  Translator  Facilitator – V |
| **2** | A + E and family.  Team 3 member | Topic - The House.  Translator  Facilitator – J |
| **3** | S  Team 3 member | Topic – Medical Matters  Translator  Facilitator – H |
| **4** | M+N  Team 3 member | Topic – Benefits  Translator  Facilitator -L |
| **5** | A+E  B (interpreter | Topic – Children and Schools  Translator  Facilitator – S |
| **6** | S  Team 3 member | Topic- What is Croeso Teifi?  Translator  Facilitator – V |
| **7** | M+N  Team 3 member | Topic- Employment and Training.  Translator  Facilitator- J |
| **8** | A+E and family.  Team 3 member | Topic – Living in the UK  Translator.  Facilitator- H |
| **9** | S  B (interpreter) | Topic - Household and Budgeting  Translator  Facilitator – L |
| **10** | M+N  Team 3 member | Topic – Learning English  Translator – N  Facilitator – S |
| **11** | A+E  Team 3 member | Topic – Life in Cardigan and Wales  Translator - A  Facilitator - H |
| **12** | S  Team 3 member | Topic –Transport.  Translator – M  Facilitator - L |
| **13** | M+N  Team 3 member | Topic- Food  Translator - E  Facilitator – R |
| **14** | A+E  B (interpreter) | Topic- What happens next?  Translator - S  Facilitators - J + V |

**Appendix B: Example Risk Assessment for Arrival**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **In order to prepare the house for safe occupancy, the following procedures will be put in place:** | | | | | | |
| **Risk Situation** | **Potential hazards and people involved** | **Potential**  **Risk** | **Safety precautions to minimize risk** | **By when** | **By whom** | **Final**  **Risk Score** |
| **Possible contamination of volunteers** | * Members of group | High | * Only one household in the house at any time. * If more than one person needed for a task (e.g. lifting heavy furniture), do this as a household where possible. If this is not possible, wear a mask, and wash hands before and after. * If local restrictions allow household mixing indoors, work in separate rooms. |  | * Members of group | Medium |
| **Possible contamination of house** | * Members of group and family | Low | * Wash hands regularly * Open windows to allow the air to circulate whilst working on the premises. * Wipe all surfaces before and after you use a shared tool. * Add stickers on all common touchpoints (e.g. light-switches, handles, taps, keys). Wipe down all surfaces you have touched before leaving. * All furnishings to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized and consumable food items such as tins will be wiped down before putting away in cupboards. | During preparation | * Members of group and family | Low |
| **Possible injury to volunteer** | Members of group  Injury caused by DIY (e.g. falling from ladders, hammering nails)  Since households cannot mix, volunteers may be working alone, and so less likely to receive help. | Medium | * Where possible, work as a household * If working alone, do not use ladders or dangerous equipment * If working alone, ensure someone knows where you are, what time you are expected to return, and how to contact you. | During preparation | * Members of group | Low |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **In order to ensure the safe collection of the family from the airport with particular reference to the Covid situation, the following procedures will be in place:** | | | | | | |
| **Risk Situation** | **Potential hazards and people involved** | **Potential**  **Risk** | **Safety precautions to minimize risk** | **By when** | **By whom** | **Final**  **Risk Score** |
| **Preparing vehicle for travel** | * Upholstery, handles and dashboard potential surface carriers of Covid * Children need car seats * Difficult to maintain distancing * Members of group and family | Low | * If practical, arrange for group members to travel separately * If possible, find a large vehicle with lots of space, to enable better social distancing * If possible, provide a dividing screen, to protect driver. * Vehicles to be sanitized and deep cleaned * Provide a child car-seat if necessary * Provide single-use tissues (in case of sneezes/coughs) and hand sanitizer * Provide snacks and water | Before departure | * Members of Croeso Teifi | Low |
| **Members travelling to meet family** | * Possible asymptomatic and carrying Covid * Group members | Low | * The greeting team *[consisting of one male and one female member of group together with an interpreter]* will take a Covid test if this is possible * The greeting team will minimise contact with other people for 10 days before travelling. * If travelling in mixed households:   Wear a mask at all times  A window to be partly open for fresh air to circulate.  Handwashing/sanitising frequently during the journey.  Bring tissues – if sneeze/cough, use single-use tissue. | In accordance with local government stipulations  On departure and thereafter during the journey | * Interpreter * Two members of Croeso Teifi | Low |
| **Rest stops and service areas on outward and return journey** | * Contact with members of the general public * Confined spaces * Members of the general public, family and group | High | * Provide snacks, and give family an opportunity to use bathroom before leaving, to minimise need for service stops. * If need to stop at services, follow entry and exit proceedings and one-way system at service area. * Hands will be sanitized on entrance and exit of service area buildings, and again once inside the minibus. * The Greeting Team will maintain at least a 2 metre distance from any other users of the service area building. | Whilst entering, leaving and on the said premises | * Interpreter * Two members of Croeso Teifi * Family | Low |
| **Arrival and entry to the airport** | * Contact with other people * Contact with surfaces * Identification of family as refugees (-- potential for discrimination) * Members of group and family | High | * At the airport, the Greeting Team will continue to wear masks, carry hand sanitizer, extra face masks and hand sanitizer, and follow entry systems into the airport premises. * Maintain 2m distance at all times * If offer to help with luggage, sanitize first * Bring a banner, but do not include any reference to “refugees” | In the airport | * Members of group and family | Low |
| **Return journey home in the minibus** | * Lack of distancing * Members of group and family | High | * Can the group members travel separately? * Or, can the family sit together at the back of a minibus, leaving rows between family and group members? * Masks will be worn throughout the journey. * Hands sanitised regularly * A window will be left partly open in order for fresh air to circulate. * Single-use tissues provided | Whilst journey home | * Members of group and family | Medium |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **In order to ensure a safe welcome into their new home, with particular reference to the Covid situation, the following procedures will be put in place:** | | | | | | |
| **Risk Situation** | **Potential hazards and people involved** | **Potential**  **Risk** | **Safety precautions to minimize risk** | **By when** | **By whom** | **Final**  **Risk Score** |
| **Possible contamination of house** | * Members of group and family | Low | * The house will have been thoroughly sanitized immediately prior to the family’s arrival * Windows will have been opened during preparation to allow ventilation | On entering the house | * Members of group an d family | Low |
| **More people exposed to potential virus contact** | * Members of group and family | Low | * Maintain distance as far as possible whilst showing family around the house. * Limit to one member of group showing family around confined areas. * Keep time to house at a minimum * Sanitize appliances, e.g. Washing machine controls before and after demonstrating use. | Arrival in the house | * Members of group and family | Low |
| **Lack of Understanding of Covid guidelines** | * Family don’t understand or follow the covid guidelines * Family & General public | Medium | * Ensure that the family have the guidelines explained to them in Arabic with the support of intrepeter * Answer any of their concerns. * Ensure the Family understand the symptoms and who to contact for support. * Ensure the family understand the importance of hand washing and understand using the supplies of hand sanitizing products, disinfecting wipes, and disinfecting spray in the house. | On dy of arrival | * Family & group members | Low |