



# Community reserve volunteer handbook

150 years the power  
of kindness



**Thank you for joining our network of community reserve volunteers. You are now part of a powerful volunteer force ready to help their local community in an emergency.**

This handbook will provide you with all the information that you need for the role, as well as some useful links where you can find out more about the British Red Cross.

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## Essential information

### About the role

Community reserve volunteers support their local community during a major emergency, by doing their bit to lend a hand when crisis strikes. This may include distributing vital supplies to those made vulnerable by the coronavirus pandemic, to helping fill sandbags if there is a risk of flooding. If your community needs help, we know you are ready to support if needed.

No specialist skills are required for most roles and when an incident happens in your area, you do not have to volunteer. We have an online training course to help you feel prepared and know how to look after yourself and others if you are asked to volunteer: [bit.ly/CRVtraining](https://bit.ly/CRVtraining)

If you are using your own car to complete a volunteering task, you must inform your insurance company that you will be using your own car for volunteering purposes.

When we need your help we will be in touch and we thank you for signing up to support your local community. In order to keep you and the people we are supporting safe, please do not volunteer under the name of the British Red Cross unless explicitly asked to do so by a member of staff.

You can also leave us at any time. Just email [reserves@redcross.org.uk](mailto:reserves@redcross.org.uk) with the subject line 'OPT OUT'.

Please note, the red cross emblem is a special symbol of neutrality and protection, whose use is restricted by international and UK laws. Please do not wear or use the red cross emblem nor the British Red Cross logo without prior permission.

### Complaints or concerns

If you have a complaint or wish to raise a concern with us, please contact [reserves@redcross.org.uk](mailto:reserves@redcross.org.uk) and we will respond within 5 working days.

### When we need your help

You will be contacted if we need your help with responding to the coronavirus or in the event of a major emergency in your local area where we need additional support.

There are a number of ways we will get in touch with you to let you know about a volunteering opportunity.

If we need help urgently, you will be contacted in one of two ways:

- 1.** We will send you a text message. The text will come from **07441 916005**. Please save this number so you know it's us.
- 2.** If you live in Scotland, Northern Ireland or Wales, and are registered on the GoodSAM app, we will send you a notification via the app. If you don't register with GoodSAM we will still notify you by text message if there is a suitable volunteer opportunity in your area.

If help is needed but we have more time to prepare, or we have received a request from a partner organisation that is asking for extra volunteers, e.g. from a local food bank, we will send you an email.

There is no obligation to volunteer and you can ignore the request if you aren't able to help at that time.

### Safe volunteering

The safety of our volunteers is always paramount. It has never been more important than during the coronavirus outbreak, so we have set up a new support system for our volunteers.

If you have any questions about your welfare, what resources are available or if you've had a difficult shift, you can email [volunteersupport@redcross.org.uk](mailto:volunteersupport@redcross.org.uk) or call us on **0808 196 3652**. Calls may be recorded for your safety.

If you are over 70 or have an underlying health condition meaning you are being asked to stay at home, you can get



involved from home with a telephone support role. Please visit [bit.ly/HowToHelpSafely](https://bit.ly/HowToHelpSafely) for government advice on how to volunteer safely.

### **Expenses**

Any reasonable out of pocket expenses you incur during your time spent volunteering will be covered. Please keep hold of any receipts related to your time volunteering. To claim your expenses, [download this form](#) and submit it to [CRVexpenses@redcross.org.uk](mailto:CRVexpenses@redcross.org.uk) within 4 weeks of your deployment. The form can also be found on the FAQs section of our website [reserves.redcross.org.uk/faq](https://reserves.redcross.org.uk/faq).

### **Q&A**

#### **How often will you need me?**

This may vary greatly and will be dependent on the emergencies your local area experiences. Some volunteers may never be called upon and some may be asked to help numerous times. The community reserve volunteer role is about being ready to help if an emergency happens and we need extra support.

#### **What are the types of things I might be asked to do?**

This is dependent on the emergency. As we tackle the impact of the coronavirus, we need help with packing food boxes, delivering vital supplies, and checking in with those who are self-isolating over the phone to make sure they are coping.

For other emergencies, such as flooding, we may need help sorting donations and filling sandbags. They will be tasks that free up our staff and trained volunteers, so they can use their time to provide more specialist support to those in need.

Regardless of the type of emergency, you will receive guidance and training for any tasks that you undertake.

You shouldn't undertake any tasks that you have not been asked to do by the British Red Cross.

#### **How do I know if I need to download the GoodSAM app?**

GoodSAM is an organisation that helps match volunteers to those who need help and we're working with them to provide volunteer opportunities in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Once you have registered to become a community reserve volunteer on our website, we will email you if you live in one of these areas to explain more about the GoodSAM registration process.

We're particularly asking anyone who may already have an enhanced DBS, AccessNI or Disclosure Scotland/PVG certificate that includes a Barred Adult list, or Barred Adult and Child list check or equivalent, which was issued in the past 12 months. This is because we're currently receiving a number of requests to support vulnerable people, which only volunteers who hold one of these checks can support with.

If you don't register with GoodSAM we will still notify you by text message if there is a suitable volunteer opportunity in your area.

#### **What should I bring with me?**

If you are asked to travel somewhere to help, we will make sure all the appropriate health and safety steps are taken and if any personal protective equipment is required for your role we will provide this. Please bring a form of photo ID and any medication that you require, as we won't be able to provide you with this if you forget.

Make sure you are wearing appropriate clothing and footwear and you may wish to bring a drink and snack along too.

We will always let you know how long a typical shift will last in advance of your arrival, so that you can be prepared.

Please do not bring any unregistered volunteers, children or pets with you.

#### **How will I know what to do when I arrive?**

This will depend on the role you are helping with. On arrival, please find a British Red Cross member of staff or volunteer who will be in Red Cross uniform and they will provide you with the

information you need. If the role is a solo activity, we will ensure you have all the information needed ahead of time and you will be given a point of contact.

Please inform them of any health or support issues that you have, so that we can support you in your role.

Please also view this short online training course in advance:  
[bit.ly/CRVtraining](https://bit.ly/CRVtraining)

### **What if I have questions or concerns during my volunteering?**

This will depend on the role you are helping with. If you are working with a member of staff then please speak with them. If you would prefer, please ring or email our volunteer welfare support line on [volunteersupport@redcross.org.uk](mailto:volunteersupport@redcross.org.uk) or call us on 08081963652\*.

### **Can I share my volunteer experience on social media?**

We'd love for you to share your volunteer experiences with us on social media, providing you have permission to include anyone else in your picture or film, and ensure you keep any details of anyone you are helping confidential. When sharing your experience, use the hashtag **#PowerOfKindness**

### **Mutual expectations**

The British Red Cross makes every effort to ensure you receive the appropriate support and feel valued as a volunteer.

#### **What you can expect from us**

- To be appreciated and respected, whoever you are and whatever your background.
- A clear explanation of what your role will involve and appropriate training prior to any tasks being undertaken.
- The opportunity to decline or change your mind about a voluntary activity, without any pressure.

#### **What we expect from you**

- To act responsibly at all times, as a representative of the British Red Cross.



Photo © Matthew Percival / BRC

- To respect your fellow volunteers.
- To arrive in appropriate clothing and bring any supplies you need (food, medication, etc.).
- To bring your photo ID with you when you arrive to a shift, and not to bring unregistered volunteers, children or pets.

## Useful links

- Our main website [redcross.org.uk](https://www.redcross.org.uk)
- The community reserve volunteers website [redcross.org.uk/reserves](https://www.redcross.org.uk/reserves)
- Government advice on how to help safely during the coronavirus outbreak [bit.ly/HowToHelpSafely](https://www.bit.ly/HowToHelpSafely)
- Our online training course [bit.ly/CRVtraining](https://www.bit.ly/CRVtraining)

To find out about further volunteering opportunities with the British Red Cross, including how to become a regular emergency response volunteer, visit [redcross.org.uk/getinvolved](https://www.redcross.org.uk/getinvolved)

## Getting in touch

If you have any comments, complaints or suggestions please contact us on [reserves@redcross.org.uk](mailto:reserves@redcross.org.uk).

We will keep you up to date on the community reserve volunteer programme with regular emails, which you can opt out to receive at any time.

## Additional information

### About the British Red Cross

The British Red Cross is a volunteer-led humanitarian organisation dedicated to helping people in crisis, wherever and whenever they are. We are part of a global voluntary network, responding to conflicts, natural disasters and individual emergencies.

When emergencies occur in the UK, the British Red Cross supports the police, ambulance and fire services, health authorities and utility

companies. Whether it's responding in severe weather, assisting residents following a house fire, or supporting statutory partners at a road traffic incident, we have thousands of volunteers across the UK ready to make a positive impact on the lives of those in need.

## Our fundamental principles

Our fundamental principles guide the work and decisions of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement for all Red Cross and Red Crescent workers in all situations and at all times.

**Humanity.** We are guided by a desire to prevent and alleviate human suffering.

**Impartiality.** We don't discriminate on the basis of nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinion. We help people in crisis whoever and wherever they are.

**Neutrality.** We don't take sides in conflict or engage in any political, racial, religious or ideological debates.

**Independence.** We are independent from government.

**Voluntary service.** We are a voluntary organisation and are not motivated by a desire for gain.

**Unity.** There can only be one Red Cross society in any country and it must be available for everyone to join.

**Universality.** All Red Cross and Red Crescent societies across the globe have equal status.

## Our values

Our core values are to remain compassionate, courageous, dynamic and inclusive, reflecting the principles of our daily work.

## Who we need support from

The British Red Cross needs volunteers like you, from all walks of life and backgrounds, who can bring different skills and experiences to help with our humanitarian work.

## Preparing for emergencies

### To prepare for emergencies

- Our website provides information on the simple precautions you can take to prepare for a range of emergency situations, along with advice on how to cope if they happen.

[redcross.org.uk/prepare](https://www.redcross.org.uk/prepare)

- You can also download our free emergency app. Our unique app delivers real-time alerts, severe weather warnings and practical advice on what to do in an emergency.

[redcross.org.uk/emergencyapp](https://www.redcross.org.uk/emergencyapp)

### To learn first aid

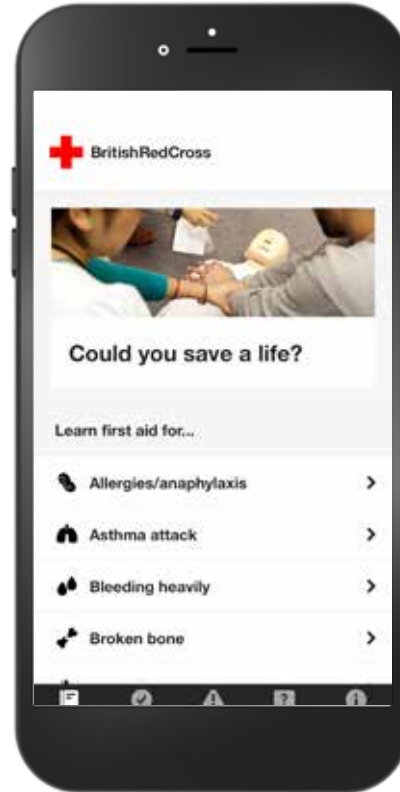
- Our free first aid app features simple, easy advice on 18 everyday first aid scenarios. With videos, interactive quizzes and simple step-by-step advice, it's never been easier to learn first aid.

[redcross.org.uk/app](https://www.redcross.org.uk/app)

- Our YouTube channel also contains lots of useful videos.

[youtube.com/BritishRedCross](https://www.youtube.com/BritishRedCross)

- You can also find out more about first aid on our website. [redcross.org.uk/firstaid](https://www.redcross.org.uk/firstaid)





## Thank you

The importance of our volunteers cannot be overstated. The support we provide throughout the UK is only made possible because of thousands of people like you, who willingly give up their time to help others. So thank you, once again, for joining us as a community reserve volunteer.



The community reserve  
volunteer project is  
supported by Aviva; enabling  
the British Red Cross and  
local communities to prepare  
for, respond to and recover  
from crisis.

Supported by



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