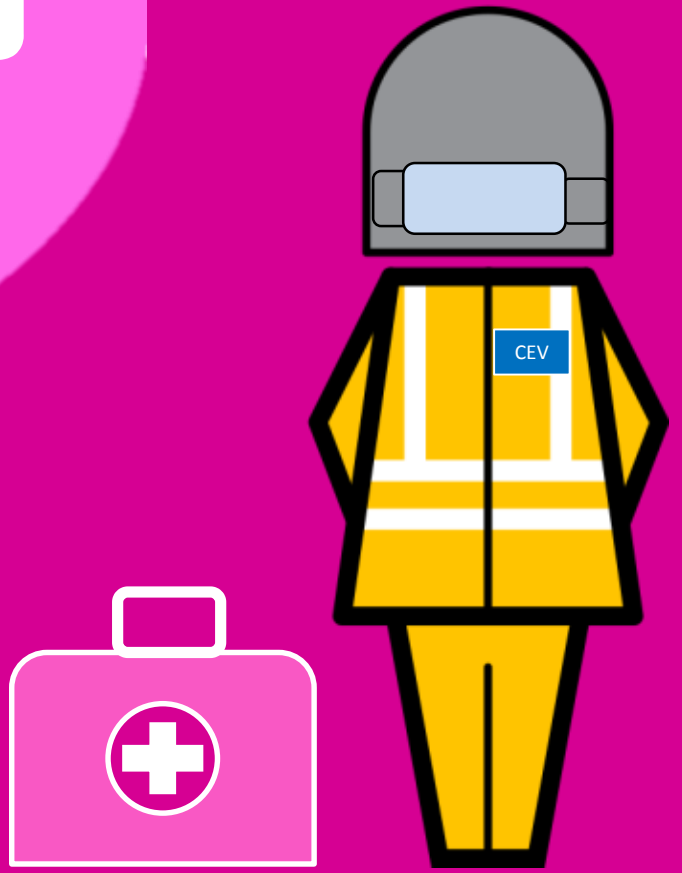
Public Health Volunteer Training

Understanding public health emergencies and your role as a Community Emergency Volunteer



Rev B – 30 / 03 / 2020 – Amendments highlighted yellow

Module objectives

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- What is a public health emergency
- Types of public health emergency
  - Pandemics
  - Temperature extremes
  - Hazardous chemical or bacteria release
  - Local communicable disease
- Who does what in a public health emergency
- Your role before a public health emergency
- Your role during a public health emergency
- Your role after a public health emergency
- Safety during a public health emergency
- Triggering a call out
- Coronavirus pre-briefing

Communities Prepared introduction

- A national community resilience programme run by the charity Groundwork, supported by The National Lottery with additional backing from The Prince's Countryside Fund and SSEN
- Working in partnership with the Environment Agency, local government, emergency services and other responder agencies, as well as charitable partners
- We support communities who need, and are keen, to become more resilient to a range of emergencies
- For more information, see our website www.communitiesprepared.org.uk or follow us on Twitter @CommunitiesPrep

A new home guard for the 21st Century!

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Our uniform

Our weapon

- Community Emergency Volunteers (CEVs) are a new form of volunteer civil defence
- They are bottom-up, self-organising and self-reliant community-based groups, able to operate with little support from local or national government during times of emergency
- They operate at the ward, town, parish, or street level depending on the emergency and location
- For advice on setting up a CEV group see our website

Timescale for the current emergency

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- Street level groups are likely to be needed for the next 4-6 months
- Wider CEV group response may be needed for longer, e.g. 12-18 months
- Peak likely to be May – June
- The next 2-3 weeks will be crucial in building communication networks and support before mass self-isolation kicks in
- (Written Mid March 2020)

What is a public health emergency?

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- World Health Organisation definition of a public health emergency of international concern:
  - “an extraordinary event which is determined…:
    - to constitute a public health risk to other States through the international spread of disease; and
    - to potentially require a coordinated international response”.

World Health Organization

Types of public health emergency

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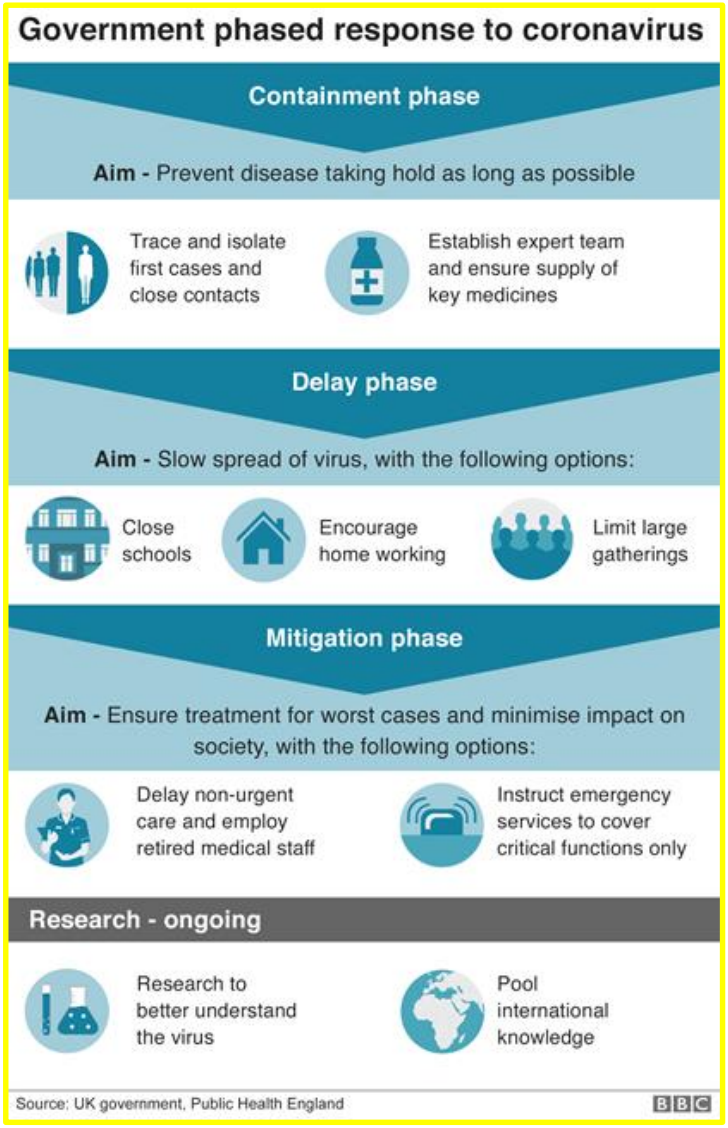
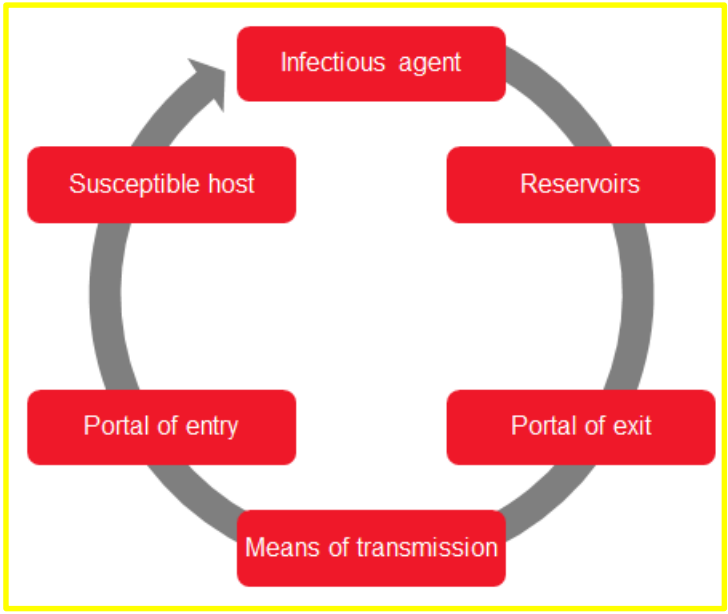
- There are 4 main types of public health emergency:
  - Pandemics
    - Zoonotic (transferable from animals to humans)
    - Non-zoonotic (non-transferable from animals to humans)
  - Temperature extremes
  - Hazardous chemical or bacterial release
  - Local communicable disease outbreak



Zoonotic pandemic

- There are several pandemic risks that can cross from animals to humans
  - Influenza (Bird / Swine / Spanish)
  - Ebola
  - Rabies
  - Coronavirus (SARS / MERS / COVID-19 /some stains of the Common Cold)
- These can be difficult to treat as we do not have natural immunity during the initial transfer period
- Influenza / Coronavirus can be transported by airborne droplets of phlegm or saliva when someone coughs, sneezes, or talks
- It can also remain on hard surfaces
- Droplets enter recipients' mouth or nasal passages & infect a new host
- Stopping spread means breaking the chain of infection



Chain of Infection

Non-zoonotic pandemic

- Animal pandemics can still be very disruptive to people's lives
- The foot and mouth outbreak in 2001 devastated livestock farmers and virtually closed down wide areas of the UK countryside
- All UK local authorities have an Animal Health Plan they will activate during a non-zoonotic pandemic
- For non-zoonotic pandemics that are not a risk to human health then Defra will take the lead in managing the crisis

Temperature extremes

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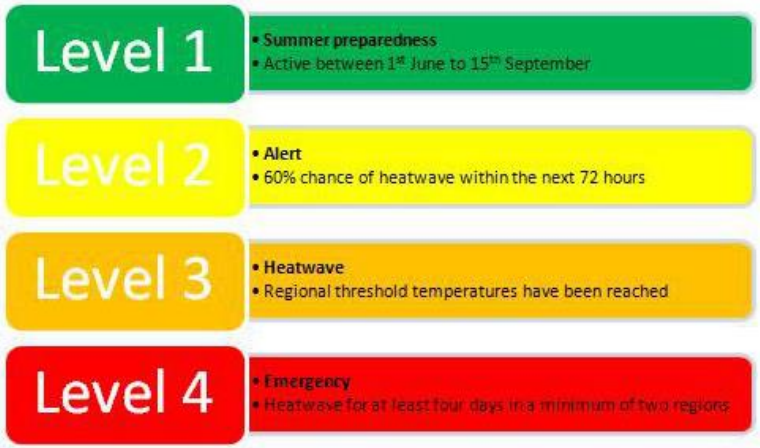
- The elderly, young or chronically ill are particularly at risk
- Estimated 18,200 additional deaths in the UK during the winter of 2013/14 due to the cold snap
- Over 760 additional deaths in the UK during a 9 day heatwave in 2013
- Public Health England runs a Heat-Health Watch and a Cold-Weather Watch depending on the time of year
- Differs from Met Office weather warnings as not UK wide and tailored for the health sector



Cold Weather Plan levels

Level 0	**Long-term planning** *All year*
Level 1	**Winter preparedness programme** *1 November to 31 March*
Level 2	**Severe winter weather is forecast – Alert and readiness** *Mean temperature of 2°C and/or widespread ice and heavy snow are predicted within 48 hours, with 60% confidence*
Level 3	**Response to severe winter weather – Severe weather action** *Severe winter weather is now occurring: mean temperature of 2°C or less and/or widespread ice and heavy snow*
Level 4	**Major incident – Emergency response** *Central Government will declare a Level 4 alert in the event of severe or prolonged cold weather affecting sectors other than health*

Hazardous chemical or bacteria release

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- This could be accidental
  - Industrial incident
  - Road traffic collision involving a vehicle transporting hazardous material
- Or malicious
  - Deliberate release (Salisbury Novichok)
  - Terror related (Tokyo Sarin attack)
- There is standard signage to denote hazardous material which can be found on packaging, vehicles and places of storage

Local communicable disease

- Local communicable diseases are outbreaks which are not pandemics or epidemics but can cause severe local disruption (school / nursery / care home closures etc)
- Examples of this are mumps, measles, legionnaires, meningitis, etc
- Most of these diseases can be controlled by a locally organised vaccination programme to raise the level of protection in the local population

Who does what in a PH emergency

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- Public Health England lead on providing advice and guidance to the general public and government in England
- NHS England will coordinate the NHS local health trusts on how they might manage hospital resources
- The local authority Director of Public Health has the statutory responsibility for the health of their local population
- Other voluntary organisations can be called in to assist areas as necessary via requests to the Local Resilience Forums

Public Health England

NHS England

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

Local level pandemic response

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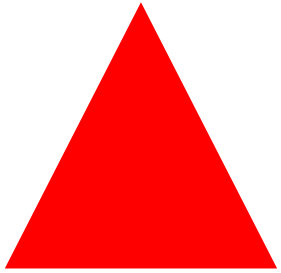
Local Authority Director of Public Health / NHS Trusts



- Tier 1 support – severest cases treated in local hospital intensive care units by NHS and specialist agencies

Town / Parish Council / NHS Volunteers

- Tier 2 support – keeping local services operating: care homes / retirement developments / GP surgeries / pharmacies / local shops

Street / Neighbourhood Spontaneous / NHS Volunteers

- Tier 3 support – minor cases self-treated at home with assistance of friends, family, and self-organising community groups

Town / Parish Councils will try to offer as much support as possible and act as a hub for the community within their resources

Your role before a PH emergency

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- Support local and national public health vaccination campaigns to build 'herd' immunity in the population
- Encourage those with medical conditions, elderly, and with young children to sign up to utility companies' Priority Services Registers. At times of national emergency these can be used to highlight potentially vulnerable people by the local authority, local NHS trusts, etc
- Keep your Town or Parish Community Emergency Plan and contact details up to date to ensure they can be relied upon during an emergency (see our Incident Management Training Part 2 or go to your Local Resilience Forum (https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-resilience-forums-contact-details) for more information if you don't already have one)
- Make contacts with your local Public Health teams / GPs to see how you can support them or get training

Your role during a PH emergency

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- Help to issue advice from public health bodies locally to reduce the flow of ‘fake news’ and the social media ‘echo chamber’
- Act as ‘Flu Buddies’ to those who are frail / elderly or having to self-isolate, delivering medicines / food and checking up on them through phone calls
- Help to staff temporary inoculation centres if required
- Make contacts with your local Public Health teams / GPs / pharmacies / food stores to see how you can support them
- Find out what local groups might be self-organising and link into them – avoid duplication of effort

If you are using private vehicles to deliver food / medication, check that your vehicle insurance covers you for undertaking charitable work

Your role during a PH emergency

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Your role after a PH emergency

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- Keep supporting the elderly / vulnerable who might take longer to come out of self-isolation than the main population
- Provide support to the community as individuals, groups and businesses seek to recover from the effects of the emergency, such as:
  - Passing on information regarding financial assistance
  - Coordinating pastoral care with local churches
  - Supporting carers and potentially the bereaved
- Provide data and de-briefing evidence to the local Director of Public Health to feed into future planning

Safety during a PH emergency

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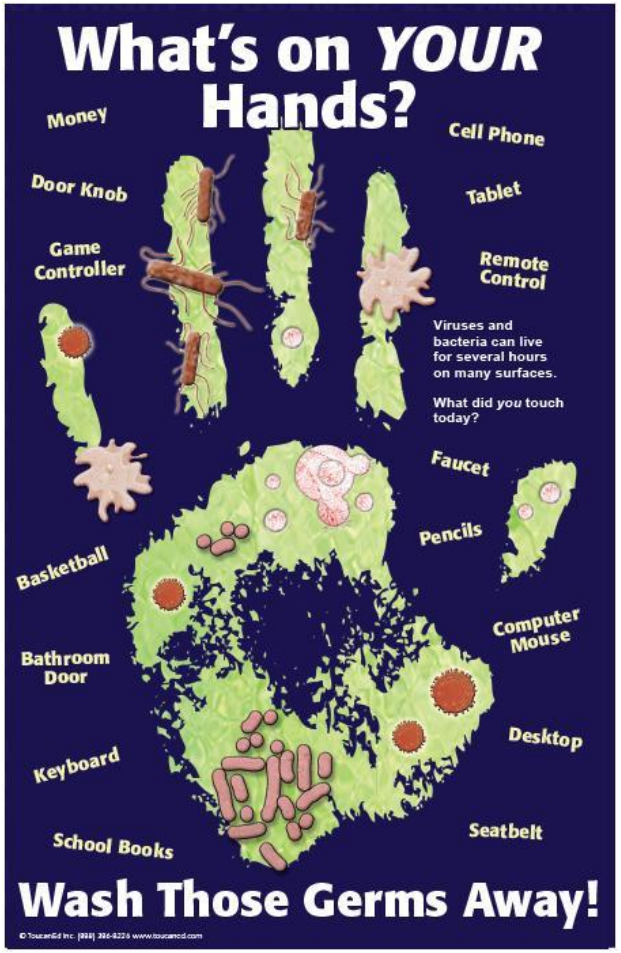
- Most recent public health emergencies are caused by the transfer of viruses from one person to another, either by direct or close contact or poor personal hygiene
- As a volunteer during a public health emergency you must maintain strict hygiene control
- If you have a cough, temperature, or other flu-like symptoms **DO NOT** respond to a call to help but instead self-isolate, go to NHS online in first instance & **DO NOT** attend your GP surgery, A&E or pharmacy.



Good hygiene control

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- Good hand hygiene is the first line of protection:
  - Wash your hands at regular opportunities with hot water and soap (Alcohol based hand sanitising gels with >60% alcohol content is an alternative but soap and water better)
  - Note that soap doesn't kill viruses but disrupts the virus outer layer allowing the water to dissolve it before washing it away
  - Drying your hands is better with disposable paper towels than hand dryers as they dry your hands more quickly
  - In order to avoid transmitting infections through touching various surfaces, use disposable gloves if you have them
- Face masks can give a false sense of security although those at high risk will benefit, including:
  - Those who are sick, self-isolating & don't wish to transmit to those they live with
  - Carers and health workers (including volunteers) in constant or regular contact with the sick

Basic advice

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Coronavirus: What you need to do

Wash your hands

Use a tissue for coughs

Avoid touching your face

How to wash your hands

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How to remove disposable gloves

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Avoiding fraud and scams

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- Work in buddy pairs when out (for safeguarding) unless delivering to your own street or to someone you know.
- Make sure if you are doing shopping or picking up prescriptions for self-isolators that they have paid for the goods. Unless you have a previous arrangement (such as BACS) do not pay with your own money.
- Most online retailers are organising telephone ordering for groceries for those not confident about online shopping. These operate on a first come, first served basis so slots will be tight.
- Other shops are organising elderly only sessions first thing in the morning (although not good for self-isolating).
- **DO NOT** let anyone give out pin numbers or accept offers to get cash out on their behalf. Be wary of strangers asking for money up front.
- Avoid passing cash due to contamination / potential fraud.
- Keep your shopper schemes local to neighbours / trusted friends & family.

Helping with safe shopping for those self-isolating - BACS

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If the self-isolator has online banking they can pay the ‘shopper’ by BACS for them doing their shopping:

1. Self-isolator phones ‘shopper’ or posts a shopping list on the street’s social media page
2. The shopper phones the self-isolator and agrees a ceiling figure for the cost of the groceries
3. The shopper purchases the shopping up to agreed limit and asks for two receipts
4. The shopping is left on the self-isolator’s doorstep by the shopper with one of the receipts and their sort code and bank account number
5. The self-isolator pays the amount noted on the receipt via BACS transfer to the shopper

No cash (reducing the likelihood of cross-contamination) or security sensitive bank account details transferred.

bacs

Part of pay.uk

“Don’t share bank PIN numbers or bank cards with each other and avoid cash. Be wary of strangers asking for money up front. If you notice suspicious activity dial 101”

Helping with safe shopping for those self-isolating – phone payments

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If your local shop can take ‘over the phone’ payments here is another way:

1. Self-isolator phones the shop assistant or shopper with a shopping list or posts it on social media
2. The shop assistant or shopper phones the self-isolator and agrees a ceiling figure for the cost of the groceries
3. The shop assistant or shopper picks up the shopping from the local store shelves and goes to check-out
4. The shopper tells the check-out assistant to phone self-isolator at home to take over the phone payment for shopping
5. Self-isolator gives card details for ‘over the phone’ payment to check-out
6. Shopper takes paid shopping and leaves on doorstep with receipts.

No cash (reducing the likelihood of cross-contamination) or security sensitive bank account details transferred.

4 golden rules for a safe drop-off

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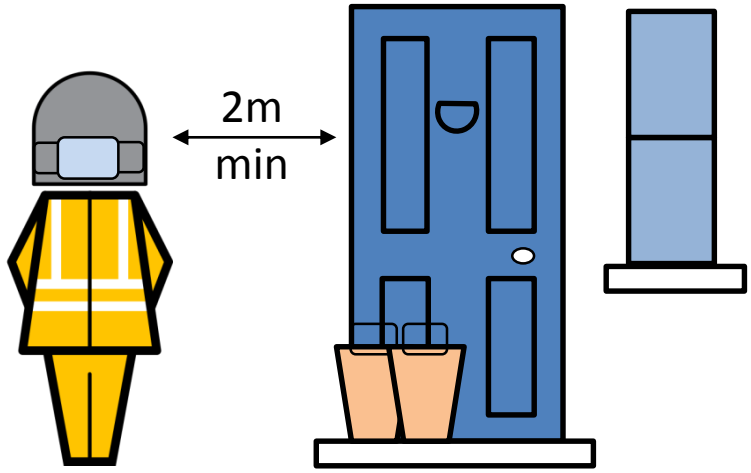
1. On arrival put on a facemask (if available, although not necessary if social distancing is maintained) & either spray your hands with gel or put on a pair of disposable gloves (if available) before getting out of the vehicle
2. Place the items to be delivered on the doorstep before ringing the bell or knocking on the door & take at least 3 steps (2m minimum) back
3. Having returned to your vehicle, dispose of your gloves (and disposable facemask if using) before touching your vehicle in a bin liner not to be treated as medical waste and treat your hands with gel again
4. When you have finished your rounds, and before eating and drinking, thoroughly wash your hands with hot water and soap for 20 seconds and safely dispose of your PPE bin bag in an outside bin

Vulnerable persons doorstep check:

- Always work in buddy pairs
- Have they got enough food?
- Are they warm/cool enough?
- Do they have enough medicines to last over the next few days?
- Are friends and family helping them?



Public Health Volunteer PPE

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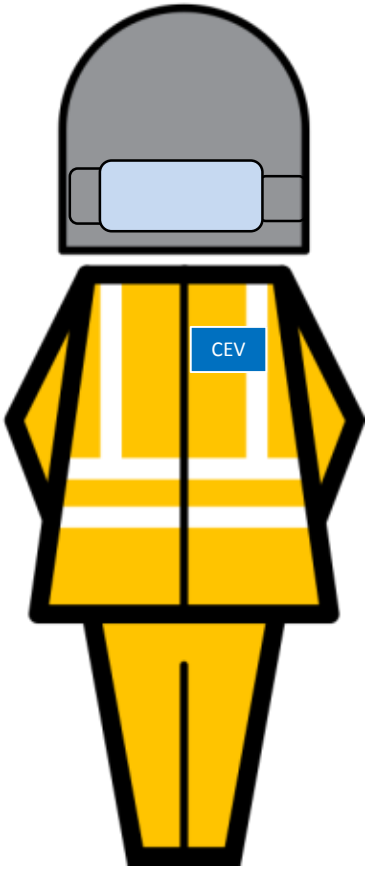
- Branded bib (for recognition) if you are supporting people you don't know
- Latex and powder free disposable gloves
- Fluid resistant disposable facemask
- >60% alcohol-based hand gel
- Drink & high energy snack

➢ This is subject to supplies! Note: Facemasks and disposable gloves are not essential provided social distancing and strict hand hygiene is maintained



Trigger call out / communications

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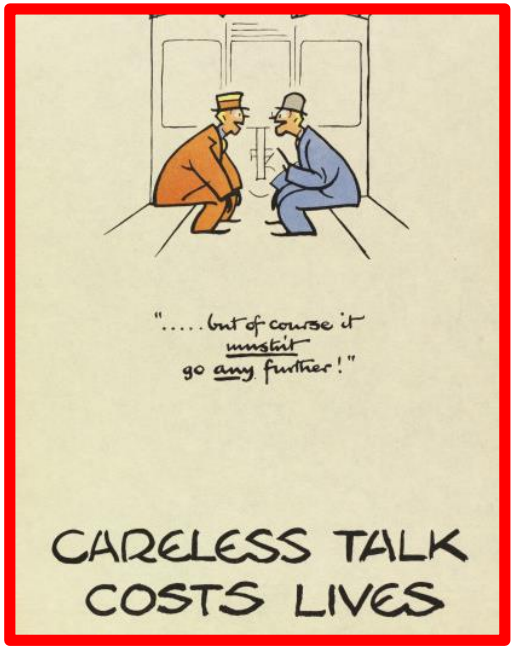
- Town or Parish Council CEV Coordinator to provide local pharmacy / GP surgery / local authority Director of Public Health with a single phone number that they can be contacted on
- When you are contacted by health agencies implement ‘Stand to’ procedures (see our Incident Management Part 2 training for more information)
- For other public health emergencies you will be mobilised when required by your local health agency
- Street level community groups should pass on a coordinator’s contact details to their town or Parish Council
- Use social media / email / telephone to keep in contact and maintain ‘social distancing’
- Don’t spread rumour and gossip; follow and promote official news resources



Recap

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- 4 main types of public health emergency
- Public Health England lead nationally
- NHS England lead hospital response
- Local Authority lead on local general public safety
- Agree your roles beforehand
- Build up local (street level social networks) and link to town / parish / ward wide networks
- Use correct PPE and equipment if available
- Maintain good hygiene control
- Be aware of scammers and fraudsters targeting your area

More information

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- Follow Public Health England Social Media and online resources
- NHS guidance: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/
- Local Authority Public Health department will issue local pertinent information
- Keep listening to local TV and radio for advice
- FutureLearn coronavirus free online course: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/covid19-novel-coronavirus
- For more information on Communities Prepared, including advice on setting up a CEV group in your area, go to www.communitiesprepared.org.uk

Thank you

Any questions?

Please get in touch at communitiesprepared@groundwork.org.uk