

Working safely

Guidance for staff and volunteers hosting outside meetings during COVID

This guidance applies to all meetings arranged by Carers in Hertfordshire outdoors that include external participants, this will usually be carers and their families but could also apply to a team around the family meeting or a multi-disciplinary team.

Preparation:

- Choose a venue where:
 - 2 m social distancing can be maintained- Whilst guidance is reducing to 1m, the risks are reduced at 2m and so this should still be our aim.
 - Access is possible without entering a property is best but if access is required this can be done without being required to touch surfaces or come close to anyone.
 - There is an appropriate level of privacy possible.
- Make checks with participants:
 - No participant has any symptoms of COVID or has been asked to self isolate by a contact tracer.
 - Anyone who is shielding will be able to be in a separate room if participants have to access via the property.
 - All participants are able and willing to abide by social distancing rules.
 - Would any participants like staff or volunteers to wear a mask during the meeting? Note we cannot commit that other participants will wear masks, only staff or volunteers. Current guidance is that masks are not required in this setting this is an optional additional precaution.
 - They are able and willing to provide their own chair or clean one before and after use. Shared chairs must not have upholstered surfaces that cannot be cleaned by wiping.
 - All participants must book to attend and may not bring additional participants. This is to ensure no more than 6 people attend in line with current guidance.

- Send information in advance
 - If sensitive information is to be shared in the meeting ensure everyone has a copy in advance to reduce the need for this to be shared verbally and a potential data breach.
 - Any handouts or information to be shared should where possible be done via post or email in advance to avoid the need for sharing documents in the meeting.
 - Guidance for participants should be sent out in advance so that everyone knows what to expect.
 - Participants should bring their own refreshments for the meeting.
- Timing for the meeting
 - Keep meetings short to reduce requirements for toilet facilities.
 - Avoid mealtimes as sharing refreshments will not be possible.
 - Consider weather forecasts.
- Yourself
 - Ensure you have access to a face covering (if required), hand sanitizer, and cleaning wipes. These can be collected from the office by prior arrangement or claimed on expenses.
 - Ensure any documents that you need are secure in a plastic folder that has been cleaned on leaving for the meeting.
 - Wash your hands thoroughly before leaving for the meeting.
 - Ensure the office or a manager is aware of the meeting, its location, purpose and timing in line with remote working policy.
 - Ensure you have a working mobile phone with you.
 - You are well with no symptoms of COVID and have not been asked to self-isolate by a contact tracer.
 - Plan to take the minimum personal bags and equipment required for the meeting, leaving other items in a secure setting.

To contact Carers in Hertfordshire call 01992 586969
Or email contact@carersinherts.org.uk

At the Meeting:

- Setting up:
 - Chairs are placed 2m apart with clear walkways to maintain social distancing. Where possible avoid chairs facing directly face to face with each other.
 - Hands should be sanitised or washed after touching anything that others will have touched such as someone else's chair or bag.
- During the meeting
 - All participants to be reminded of the need to adhere to guidance by reading the agreed statement at the beginning of each and every meeting.
 - If any documents are exchanged, they should be wiped down prior to exchange and hands sanitized.
 - If the meeting is in a private garden and someone from another household needs to use the toilet facilities, they should clean them after use and wash hands thoroughly. Staff or volunteers should not undertake this task for others.
 - Refreshments should not be served; participants should provide their own if they are required.
 - All documents that contain personal details must be stored securely to ensure confidentiality and protection from wind and or rain.
- End of meeting
 - People that have not used their own chairs should be asked to clean the chair they have used prior to leaving.
 - People should be encouraged to stagger the time they leave in order to maintain social distancing.
 - Staff and volunteers should wash or sanitise their hands on leaving and again on arrival at their destination.
 - Staff should let the office or line manager know that meeting has been concluded.