



We urge all those in community rail to keep up-to-date and follow the latest government requirements and advice for [England](#), [Scotland](#) or [Wales](#) and your area.

Currently, this means everyone should stay at home, with community rail/station volunteering and face-to-face activities on hold: only community rail work and activities that can be carried out from home, online, digitally or over-the-phone should be going ahead (see below for ideas on this). It's important you comply with the rules, align with the approach and messaging of your train operator(s) and local authority/ies, and **do as much as you can to keep yourselves and others safe.**

This page aims to supplement official rules and guidance by helping those in community rail understand what it means for them. **For further advice, please [contact our team](#).**

Meetings and working from home

Our members should work from home and run events and meetings online. Planning ahead is important: it's advisable to assume that restrictions on face-to-face meetings and events will continue for some time.

We can offer advice on technical communications needs, from setting up Zoom and Teams meetings, to social media messaging. If you need help, please [contact our team](#). The LGA also has this [list of video conferencing and audio platforms](#) to help groups to stay in touch.

Our staff team continue to use online and phone communications to support and advise members and partners as usual, and are contactable by [mobile or email](#).

Community rail events and networking

All our events have been rescheduled or moved online and this will continue at least until spring 2021. We are currently preparing for our conference for community rail partnerships to take place online in March, and further webinars and online courses will be set up in the Spring. See [our Events Diary](#) for opportunities to hear about good practice and connect with your fellow community railers. [Our team](#) can also put you in touch with other members or partners if you're looking for advice or experience on particular activities.

Dealing with change and uncertainty

We know this continues to be a difficult time for many of you, professionally and personally. Our training and development team have produced guidance on [how to cope with change](#), which we hope is useful. [Let us know](#) how you're adapting, planning and keeping positive.

Make sure you're keeping in touch with volunteers and contacts who may be feeling isolated and offer to help them where needed.

Volunteering and station adopters

Due to the current lockdown restrictions, **all station adoption/friends/community rail activities at and around stations need to be put on hold again**. We will keep this under review when restrictions start to be lifted, in discussion with rail industry partners. We will work with these partners to ensure there are timely communications to station groups and community rail partnerships when activities can start up again, and to ensure these appropriate and safe.

Many groups are keeping active and engaging communities through creative and online activities at-home. If you're looking for ideas of what you can do without being on the station, see these [ideas](#) from one station adopter or our [news stories](#) or speak to our team.

Advice on travel

In [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#), travel is restricted to essential journeys only. For those who need to travel, community rail can play a key role in promoting [safe travel guidance](#). Some key messages community rail can help to promote include:

- Follow travel restrictions where you are;
- Do not travel if you feel unwell or have symptoms;
- Keep two metres away from others. Even where the distance has been reduced to one metre, governments continue to recommend two whenever possible;
- Wear face coverings on trains at all times, unless exempt (see this advice on [how to make one](#)). This is mandatory in England, Scotland and Wales, and in England and Scotland includes within stations. In Wales, [three-layer coverings](#) are advised;
- Wash your hands before and after your journey and carry and use hand sanitiser.
- Travel on less busy services where possible. Be aware of restrictions specific to a station or train operator (e.g. reservation-only travel). See our [handy list](#) showing where to find information on how busy different trains are;
- Be aware of changes in how you enter, exit or move around stations: some have different queueing or one-way systems in place.

You can also see our general advice on how to [use communications to encourage confidence and positivity](#) about rail and sustainable travel, to help you plan ahead for when we can proactively promote rail travel again. [Our team](#) can advise.

Communications and marketing

This is a good time to make sure your online and social media channels are up to date and effective. If you need help or advice using and improving your communication channels, such as your website, social media or engaging local media, see our resources on [marketing and communications](#) or [tourism promotion](#), or [contact our team](#).

Don't forget that Community Rail Network and some train operators [have grants](#) that may be able to help you fund improvements to your website.

Take care with communications that you aren't seen to be breaching government advice. For example, if sharing a photo where people are not social distancing, be clear it's from pre-Covid.

Local engagement, planning and partnership working

Keep communicating with staff, volunteers, communities and partners, using phone, email, social media and online. **Reinforce the sense of community** and use the chance to plan ahead to positive work you'll do together in the future. Consider new partners you could work with to help your community recover and rebuild.

Communities around Britain are finding ways to cope and build resilience, especially by mobilising volunteer support to assist the most vulnerable. Many local authorities are coordinating initiatives, and you may have local community groups that are looking for extra support. This is a good time to build links and consider working together longer term.

Consider too how you can play a maximum role in Covid-19 recovery and 'building back better'. For example, many local authorities are developing walking and cycling networks due to increased government funding – could you advise them on making connections with rail? [See our briefing on community rail's role in recovery.](#)

Activities with children and young people

A big part of community rail is engaging children, young people and families, to build awareness and confidence about rail and sustainable travel. While we can't run workshops or try the train trips, these can be planned for the future by talking to educators, youth groups, and train operators. Some of our members are finding ways to engage children, young people and families through digital means: ask [our team](#) to be put in touch with others using these methods.

You can also still promote rail-related information and resources on your website, or social media, or promote a call out for people in your area to submit art or writing on a community rail or local theme, like favourite train trips or views. See these [examples](#). Also see our [youth engagement report](#) to consider how you can develop this work in future.

Supporting rail partners

Our partners in rail and government are facing big challenges. We encourage all our members to be as supportive and patient as possible, and consider if you can use [our team](#) as a first port of call for your query. At the same time, keep following partners' updates, to see if there's anything you can promote or support.

Further advice

[NCVO has guidance](#) for the third sector, including on carefully managing your finances during this time. Please talk to [our team](#) if you have any worries about financial security.

Locality has produced [a list of funding available](#) to the community and voluntary sector during the pandemic.

The [National Rail website](#) includes the latest travel advice, as well as links to guidance from individual train operators, FAQs, and how to use face coverings.

Our team is working from home and our office closed, but you can get in touch by email or mobile with any queries – see our [meet the team page](#).

Please also make sure you're [signed up to our email bulletin](#), issued fortnightly on a Wednesday, for further advice on adapting, plus updates on our services and events.

You can also keep in touch on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

KEEP THIS TEXT TO DROP IN WHEN RELEVANT AGAIN:

Where volunteer activities on stations are permitted, remember:

- Always check with your train operator what is currently allowed at your station(s)/location(s). Whatever they permit, you must still stay at home if you are feeling unwell or showing any signs of Covid-19.
- The railway continues to be operational, so continue to follow the usual essential safety precautions (see our [station adoption handbook](#)). DO NOT go on the railway tracks, off the platform or closer than two metres to the platform edge;
- Stick to the maximum numbers of volunteers on the station, as set by your train operator: depending on the area, this is two, four or six volunteers at the same time;
- Volunteers should keep two metres from each other;
- Visits should be made at quieter times of the day;
- Limit the number of visits made to a station each week;
- Restrict activities to essentials, e.g. weeding, planting and watering, or (where permitted) litter picking and updating noticeboards;
- Wear face coverings (unless exempt) at all times at stations to protect others and set a positive example, while continuing to maintain social distancing rules;
- Carry hand sanitiser, to help avoid using passenger facilities for hand washing and sanitising, and use it regularly in line with advice;
- Be aware of 'touch points' (surfaces others are likely to touch, like railings and doors) and avoid touching these if possible, or sanitise hands before and afterwards;
- Keep away from passengers, railway staff and avoid activities at pinch points where social distancing is difficult;
- Pause activities when a train arrives or departs to allow passengers and staff to have as much space on the station as possible;
- Don't travel long distances to visit a station to volunteer, and walk or cycle if you can; follow local rules and restrictions on travel;
- Don't interfere with any rail/transport/local authority signage, posters or arrangements related to Covid-19;
- Bring your own tools and leave nothing behind on the station when you leave.

Keep up to date on localised restrictions currently in force in [England](#), [Scotland](#) and [Wales](#).