

National volunteering scheme opens today

Volunteering campaign launched for those able to give support.

The new 'Scotland Cares' campaign, announced by the First Minister on Sunday, has been launched to encourage people to volunteer during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

While the most important ask for the public remains to stay at home and follow the essential public health guidance, people who are healthy and not at risk can volunteer to provide practical or emotional help to those most in need.

Those wanting to volunteer to support their communities have three options which are signposted from the [Ready Scotland](#) website:

- returning NHS workers will be directed to existing voluntary arrangements in NHS Scotland
- people wishing to offer their support to our public services, including the NHS and local authorities, will be directed to a site co-ordinated by the British Red Cross
- those looking for opportunities with other charities or community groups in their area will be directed to Volunteer Scotland for information

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said: "We know there are a huge number of people who are already volunteering and many more with a desire to help their communities, public services and voluntary organisations. And for that we are incredibly grateful."

“This site means that those who are able to can contribute in a way which makes a real difference. It helps people to help each other, as we all get through this together.”

Cabinet Secretary for Social Security and Older People Shirley-Anne Somerville said: “The Scottish Government is working closely with local government and a range of partners to co-ordinate the volunteering effort across Scotland.

“By providing this national portal we will be able to connect people to where their contribution is most needed in their local community, ensuring everyone can play their part in helping Scotland come through this pandemic.

“For some, that may involve roles responding to specific needs in health and social care. For others, it may be that we draw on their skills, enthusiasm and energy in the weeks and months to come.

“It is important to remember that the most helpful thing many of us can continue to do to help the NHS is to stay at home and follow all COVID-19 guidance.”

Volunteers who would like to support their communities should visit www.ReadyScotland.org to find out how they can help.