

CIO 1205090



COCKERMOUTH VOLUNTEER HANDOUT

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2.3	B McDonald	08 January 2026

CERG mobile number is 07852 599794

VOLUNTEER INDUCTION PACK

In an emergency the Christ Church rooms, South Street will be activated as our Operational Control Centre (OCC). If we are unable to access this venue, our contingency venue is Cockermouth Scout Centre.

Thank you so much for choosing to volunteer with Cockermouth Emergency Response Group (CERG). We are delighted that you have stepped forward and this document is important induction information. Please ensure that you have read and understood it fully so that you can help people effectively and safely. At the end of this document, you will find fact sheets and important information to support you in your role. We will adapt our approach as and when the need arises – each emergency response situation will be different. All of our emergency plans and protocols can be viewed on our website www.cerg.org.uk

What happens now?

By registering with us you will be added to our database of volunteers. Your details will be added to our SMS messaging system if you have provided us with a mobile number. This is often the first way of alerting you that we need help. There will be various events and training sessions that you will also be invited to attend.

About us

Our group was formed in the aftermath of the flooding events of 2015 when volunteer groups in our town came together to help our community. The group is governed by a board who are all volunteers and also employs a part time Administrator.

Committee members:

Name	Role
Bridget McDonald	Administrator
Brian Mitchelhill	Chair of Trustees
Paul Mogford	Trustee & Operational Director
Hayley Bishop	Treasurer, Trustee
Rob Coles	Trustee
Andy Turner	Pumps, mapping, deputy Administrator, Trustee
Liz Hampson	Ops Team member
Ian Allison	Ops Team member
Liam Darby	Ops Team member

Contact information

Please add our email address to your contact list so that any emails will go into your inbox rather than your junk folder.

Official email: admin@cerq.org.uk

You can contact us on 07852 599794. We do not work set hours but are usually contactable around the clock. If you find there is no answer, please leave a message and someone will get back to you.

Health and Safety Policy:

We seek to provide a safe and healthy place for you to volunteer in. To achieve this, we need your active support and will, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Provide safe premises and safe systems of work
- Provide safe and healthy working conditions
- Ensure all employees and volunteers are competent to undertake their tasks and to give them adequate training and advice
- Provide information, instruction, training and support in safety matters.

Our risk assessment can be viewed on our website and this is reviewed annually by the board. Responsibility for observing the information provided in the risk assessment lies with Ops Team members, employees and volunteers.

Responsibilities

The responsibility for ensuring this policy is put into practice when dealing with an emergency situation is delegated to the Ops Team leader.

It is the responsibility of the Ops Team to ensure that the information provided to volunteers will be in a form that can be easily understood.

All Trustees, Ops Team members, employees and volunteers have a duty to:

- Work safely, efficiently and without endangering the health and safety of themselves, their colleagues or the public.
- Adhere to the safety procedures laid down by the management board.
- Report all health and safety concerns, accidents, near miss occurrences and hazardous situations to the Ops Team leader.
- Use equipment correctly in accordance with training and instructions.

First Aid & Accidents

A basic First Aid box will be held in the emergency boxes held at Christ Church rooms. The contents will be checked regularly with the date of inspection being recorded on the box. All accidents are to be recorded in the Accident Book which is located in the same boxes. The Ops Team leader is responsible for ensuring the reporting of relevant accidents, diseases and dangerous occurrences to relevant external agencies.

Personal Protective Equipment

We ask that everyone brings their own hand sanitizer and masks if operating in a pandemic. If you cannot provide these, PPE will be issued if required to our members at the time of the incident being responded to. We will follow the relevant government guidelines at the time.

Insurance

The group is registered with Neighbourhood Watch and both the Ops Team, employees and our volunteers are covered by their Public Liability Insurance when volunteering with us. In addition our Trustees have their own insurance.

Volunteers are required to carry out their role in a safe manner. Some car insurance policies cover the use of a private vehicle for volunteering now after the Covid Pandemic. If in doubt please check with your insurer and ensure that you have the appropriate business insurance. Anyone tasked to drive a vehicle on CERG's behalf will be asked to provide evidence that they have a valid licence and insurance, if using their own vehicle.

Volunteers are only covered for 'jobs' that they are tasked to do.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

For the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulations 2018 (GDPR), the data controller in respect of your personal data is Cockermouth Emergency Response Group. We hold personal data about all our volunteers. Your data will be used to administer your volunteering and will not be shared with any third party without your prior permission unless it is to render emergency assistance. The extent of the personal data held will vary but may include contact details, medical information you have provided etc. Please see our GDPR policy on our website for further information.

Our commitment is to respect volunteers' rights in data protection law.

In the course of your volunteering, you may come into contact with and use personal information about people you are supporting. We ask that you do not disclose **any** personal information to others unless it is to ensure you can carry out your volunteer role effectively. It must then not be discussed further. If you do, this is a breach of the Data protection act and GDPR which is illegal and we may have to take further action.

Whilst you are volunteering you may have access to information that needs to be kept confidential. This includes information about the people who have been flooded – particularly information about their personal circumstances such as their names, addresses, information about their financial position and details of the challenges they are facing following the emergency.

When someone gives us any confidential information, they need to be sure that we will not pass this to anyone that they have not given us permission to share it with. This means, for example, that you must not discuss these details with your friends and family, or post it on social media.

However, you may also hear information which causes you concern – for example, information which suggests that someone needs immediate help (for example, a child at risk, or an older person in need of urgent support). If this happens you should share this information with a member of the CERG Operations Team as soon as possible so that appropriate action can be taken BUT remember anyone can call Social Services or the Police when they are concerned about extreme situations.

Photography/Film

Images in which people can be identified are a form of personal data and this is protected by the same legislation as other personal information. There will be occasions where we will take photos and/or film footage of events. These images may be used by us as follows:

- Printed publicity

- Online publicity (including our website and social media)
- Shared with various third part organisations (such as the press) for use in their printed and online publicity (including social media).

We will endeavour to seek permission before we include you, but if you would prefer not to be photographed or filmed, please let our Ops Team leader know.

Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)

In order to minimise any safeguarding risks, DBS checks may be carried out by us for key volunteering roles.

Safeguarding

CERG is committed to protecting the wellbeing of all individuals - both volunteers and the people we support. We follow a clear **Safeguarding Policy** (www.cerg.org.uk/policies) that must be observed at all times. During emergencies, anyone can become vulnerable, so it's important to act with sensitivity and respect.

To help ensure safety for everyone:

- Work in pairs whenever possible.
- Avoid entering a property alone.
- Do not make physical contact unless it is necessary and appropriate for the situation.
- If physical contact is required, always seek consent first.

If you need further advice on Safeguarding, please speak to your team leader.

Diversity and Inclusion

Volunteers and our clients receive the same treatment regardless of their gender, culture, sexual orientation, marital status, age, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious belief, disability or background. If you have particular pronouns that you wish to use, please also advise the Ops Team leader.

Donations and gifts

If someone you encounter during the course of volunteering with CERG wishes to make a donation, please ask them to contact our Ops Team leader.

Volunteers should not accept gifts, gratuities and bequests. If the situation arises, then volunteers must explain that it is their role to support individual clients and therefore it is not appropriate to accept personal gifts for services provided, though the gesture is appreciated.

Complaints

The group aims to provide a service of a standard which is acceptable to all of our clients and individuals that we support. If we fail to do this, we want to know about it. This will enable us not only to deal with the specific problem, but also to avoid it happening again. Complaints are likely to be in one or more of the following areas:

- Dissatisfaction with our services
- Discourtesy or unhelpfulness on the part of the volunteers
- Dishonesty of volunteers

All complaints should be reported to the Ops Team Leader immediately.

Compliments

Positive feedback can be used to promote the difference volunteers make and will encourage others to volunteer. They are just as important as complaints and please let the Ops Team leader know about them.

Expenses

Very occasionally, mileage and other incurred expenses may be claimed. Please discuss with the Ops Team leader as agreement should normally be sought in advance.

VOLUNTEERING AGREEMENT

We are committed to treating all of our volunteers with respect.

This below outlines what we can expect from each other whilst you volunteer with us.

We will provide you with:

- A safe, respectful, fair and non-discriminatory volunteering environment
- A clear explanation of what your role involves, what is expected of you and who you need to speak to if you need support
- Recognition and thanks
- Adequate public liability insurance
- The ability to stop volunteering with us without pressure or judgement

In return we ask that you:

- Perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- Be accountable for your actions
- Support and abide by the group's instructions, aims and objectives
- Not accept any gifts from people you are supporting
- Treat fellow volunteers, Ops Team and employees with courtesy and respect
- Respect and maintain confidentiality of clients and volunteers with CERG. It is illegal to disclose information that is confidential to an individual, and should this occur, the Board of Trustees may need to take further action.
- Let us know if you wish to change the nature of your contribution
- Let us know if we can improve the service and support that you receive.
- Say no if you feel a task is beyond your capability.

Acceptance and agreement:

I confirm that I have read and understood the requirements of volunteering for Cockerthorpe Emergency Response Group (CERG). I understand that whilst volunteering with CERG that I may come across information that is confidential, and agree that I will never disclose such confidential information to anyone outside CERG.

I understand the boundaries and responsibilities associated with this role and know of no reason that I am unable to safely and competently carry out these duties.

This agreement is binding in honour only, it is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party. Neither of us intends any employment relationship to be created now or at any time in the future.

Signed.....

Dated

FLOODING

Call out Process:

This is the most likely occurrence that we will need you. If there is an emergency you will be contacted by phone, text or email (possibly after previous email contact). You will be asked to go to the Christ Church Rooms OR directly to some other control point OR asked to wait for further instructions.

If you are asked, and are available, please come equipped with:

- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers,
- Wellies or walking boots,
- Please bring a mobile phone. (Charged and with money on it). **This is essential if you are to be a lead volunteer.**
- Specs!
- Pocket notebook
- If working in a pandemic e.g., like Covid 19, please consider adding a mask, hand sanitiser and disposable gloves to your equipment.

If you need to ring us back, use the CERG mobile number above. Please be patient as the operator may be dealing with numerous phone calls. If there is an undue delay, then you can use the mobile number for Paul Mogford, Brian Mitchelhill or Bridget McDonald.

Contact Name	Contact Number
Paul Mogford	07834 993572
Administrator	07852 599794
CERG mobile	07852 599794

Once you arrive at the control point

Sign in as a volunteer for the event on the sign in sheet at the entrance point. Go to the volunteer co-ordinator who will give you further instructions/equipment. The volunteer co-ordinator will be wearing a hi-vis jacket. Please make sure you tell the volunteer co-ordinator if you need to leave by a specific time.

VERY IMPORTANT: Make sure that the OCC has the number of the phone you have with you.

Volunteer protocol

If the emergency is a flood, volunteers are likely to be used around the town to warn and inform residents before things get bad, and then withdrawn.

Do not try to carry on when withdrawn

ALWAYS WORK WITHIN OUR SAFETY GUIDELINES TO MINIMISE ANY RISK TO YOU OR THOSE AROUND YOU

You may not be needed straight away. We will give advice on when to come back to the OCC if we have enough volunteers to have a 'shift' system. You may be needed to relieve someone later. We will always try keep you posted.

Practical Notes

WHEN COMING IN FOR A FLOOD EVENT, PLEASE DO NOT PARK A CAR WHERE IT IS LIKELY TO BE AT RISK.

WE ARE NOT SWIFT WATER TRAINED AND SHOULD NOT BE OUT IN FLOOD WATER. DO NOT ENTER ANY WATER, NO MATTER HOW SHALLOW

IF YOU GO HOME MAKE SURE THAT YOU REGISTER 'OUT' WITH THE CONTROL POINT WHO REGISTERED YOU IN.

If the Emergency Services have to look for us then our contribution to mitigating the emergency is negative.

- Listen to any instructions given by trained professionals (Fire and Rescue, Police, Mountain Rescue)
- Listen to the instructions of your zone leader
- Don't get distracted from your task
- Stay in pairs – never work alone
- Don't put yourself at risk to get to personal belongings or other persons – only agree to move what one person might reasonably carry. We shouldn't move furniture only irreplaceable items or important documents.
- If you are uncomfortable doing something, don't do it
- Be careful when lifting items – always consider your back – you know what you can and can't manage to do – the onus is on you to work sensibly
- Please don't speak to the press – we will do that for you
- Do not enter closed spaces with only one entrance/exit
- Do not enter anywhere e.g. basements where there is a danger of flood water
- Do not enter premises alone – **ALWAYS WORK IN PAIRS**

When talking to householders these are a selection of points to mention.

Before a flood

- Register to receive flood warnings – 0845 988 1188 or register online at <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>
- Have a personal flood plan

- Make a list of items for your flood kit – pack them together if appropriate (medication, important paperwork)

During a flood

- Move furniture and valuable items upstairs if possible
- Move their cars away from flood risk areas to high ground
- Move their pets, to friends or family residences that will keep them safe
- Turn off gas and electricity if possible
- Tell someone (neighbour, Emergency services, volunteer, CERG) if they leave their home. This is to ensure we don't spend lots of time looking for someone who has sensibly moved themselves, away from danger, to a relative or friend's home.
- Tune into Radio Cumbria 95.6-96.1FM
- Contact Cockermouth Emergency Response Group – 07852 599794

But don't panic we have guides for you to use in such an emergency available on the day

Here's a guide to what the Environment Agency flood warnings mean:

<p>Flood Alert</p> <p>What it means Flooding is possible. Be prepared.</p>  <p>When it's used Two hours to two days in advance of flooding.</p> <p>What to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to act on your flood plan. • Prepare a flood kit of essential items. • Monitor local water levels and the flood forecast 	<p>Flood Warning</p> <p>What it means Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.</p>  <p>When it's used Half an hour to one day in advance of flooding.</p> <p>What to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move family, pets and valuables to a safe place. • Turn off gas, electricity and water supplies if safe to do so. • Put flood protection equipment in place.
<p>Severe Flood Warning</p> <p>What it means</p>	<p>When warnings are no longer in force, it means that no further flooding is currently expected in your area and river or sea conditions are beginning to return to normal.</p>

Severe flooding.
Danger to life.



When it's used

When flooding poses a significant threat to life.

What to do

- Stay in a safe place with a means of escape.
- Be ready should you need to evacuate from your home.
- Co-operate with the emergency services.
- Call 999 if you are in immediate danger.

(Source:
<https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/guide/weather/flood-warnings/what-does-this-mean>)

USEFUL WEBSITES FOR WEATHER INFORMATION/FLOODING

Environment Agency – https://www.gov.uk/check-flooding
Met Office Cockermouth weather forecast https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/weather/forecast/gctwgrhe8#?date=2022-03-23
What 3 words – find your location for emergency services anywhere in the world https://what3words.com/
Reporting block drains https://www.cumberland.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-transport/streets-roads-and-pavements/road-maintenance-closures-and-improvements/report-problem-street-or-road/flooding-blocked-gullies-and-drains
Follow us on Facebook @CockermouthEmergencyResponseGroup Or Twitter @CockermouthG

POWER OUTAGE

If there is a prolonged power outage for more than twenty-four hours, then we may well be called upon to help advise householder and provide hot food and drinks. With this however there is a problem that mobile phones, emails and the internet

might not be working. If there is a general failure of all routine communication routes, there is a standing instruction that if there is a general power outage in Cocker mouth for more than 24 hours, please assemble at Christ Church Rooms at either 10am or 2pm whichever is the soonest. Ops Team members will meet you there and advise if we are to assist the statutory authorities.