

## COVID READY

GUIDANCE FOR GU VOLUNTEERS, CLUBS & SOCIETIES DURING COVID-19

### WELCOME

Hello! If you are a new or returning student, it is great to see you.

This year may look and feel slightly different, but *Glasgow University Students' Representative Council* (GUSRC) is here to offer you as much support as we can muster, to help make your experience at university and in this city as safe, memorable and positive as possible.

### OVERVIEW

GUSRC has produced broad guidance for *University of Glasgow* students wishing to undertake extracurricular activities, namely volunteering, clubs and societies in academic session 2020/2021 whilst the COVID-19 pandemic continues.

The undernoted advice is general, non-specific and is not exhaustive. However, our hope is this brief document will help students – individually and in groups and committees – consider risk, health and welfare, and the precautions needed to safely participate in or organise events and activities.

Information has been collated from several sources, including the *Scottish Government*, *University of Glasgow*, *Volunteer Scotland*, *Transport Scotland* and the *Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations* (SCVO).

Please note, local and national advice is fluid and can change daily, frequently.

### FOR EVERYONE

#### **STAY INFORMED**

Keep up-to-date, as often as you can with advice from [NHS Inform](#) – the country's *National Health Service* – and the [Scottish Government](#).

If you develop the following symptoms:

- high temperature or fever
- new continuous cough
- loss of or change in sense of smell or taste

you must self-isolate for a minimum period of 14 days and arrange for a test. You should not engage in any volunteering activities, or clubs and society events during this time.

#### **STAY HYGIENIC AND FOLLOW BEST PRACTICE**

Follow the advice from the *NHS* on how to avoid catching COVID-19. These include:

- avoid direct hand contact with eyes and mouth
- maintain good hand hygiene
- avoid direct contact with people that have a respiratory illness and avoid using their personal items such as their mobile phone
- covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing with disposable tissues and disposing of them in the nearest waste bin after use
- make sure you follow the *Scottish Government's* coronavirus advice as much as possible
- make sure you follow the physical distancing advice, especially with anyone in a vulnerable group

## FOR VOLUNTEERS

### GU VOLUNTEERING

GUSRC's *GU Volunteering* department is *University of Glasgow's* single volunteering service. It seeks and sustains relationships with around 50 distinct, local community partners; charities, social enterprises and neighbourhood projects. These partnerships offer a diverse range of volunteering opportunities, and we link them with students who can make a genuine difference, through the application of their energies, skills and interests which are honed at the university.

Most of our opportunities are run by our partners. And although *GU Volunteering* is assured – through site visits and robust enquiry – of the safety of our partners' activities and processes, it is equally important that students take responsibility for staying safe and asking the right questions.

### GETTING STARTED OR CHANGING YOUR VOLUNTEERING

During the pandemic, essential services – such as foodbanks, homeless shelters – have continued to operate. They require face-to-face interactions, and volunteers willing and able to help with these projects. But some of our volunteering options also allow for remote working and digital, at distance support, such as befriending and tutoring, and some opportunities are based outdoors. These are regarded as no or lower risk activities, concerning the transmission of COVID-19. Visit the *GU Volunteering* [database](#) or get in contact with the team to discuss your options and explore what is available.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

If you are working with service users or you yourself are vulnerable or at higher risk of COVID-19, consider whether you should be engaged in activities that may expose you to increased risk. If you are committed to participating in this type of volunteering, ask about supply and use of 'Personal Protective Equipment' (PPE). This should be provided to you by the volunteering provider. The *Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations* (SCVO) states "**volunteers should be supported and protected from risk in the same way as staff. Although they may not have a formal employment contract, they are covered by health and safety legislation and any risks to their activity with [an organisation] needs to be assessed [by that organisation]**".

### TRAVEL

Many *GU Volunteering* partners are situated across the city, some closer to campus than others. We advise students consider the location of current or prospective volunteering projects, in relation to campus and personal residence, and examine how you might travel to and from locations. Remember, Scotland's weather is very variable, if you are thinking about walking or cycling! There is helpful advice on the [Transport Scotland](#) website to help you plan your travel. Students can also sign up for [nextbike](#), a Glasgow-wide bike hire scheme with 70 cycle station located around the city. Follow the link – or search online – and find out how to register.

### IF YOU BECOME UNWELL

If you become unwell while you are volunteering, you should inform your point of contact / volunteering manager at the project you are volunteering with – or any other person involved, if they are not available – and go home and self-isolate. If you feel you are seriously unwell, call NHS 111 for advice or dial 999 in an emergency. You should also inform *University of Glasgow* via the [UoG Helpdesk](#).

Remember, **volunteering is a choice, freely made. You can discontinue at any time.** Although, we do advise that you give the volunteering provider – and *GU Volunteering* – as much notice as possible if you intend on stopping, to allow adequate cover to be arranged for temporary and permanent absence.

## FOR CLUBS & SOCIETIES

### GU CLUBS & SOCIETIES

In 2019/2020 there were 337 affiliated clubs and societies at *University of Glasgow*, some small, some large, each with unique events and activities. Due to the scale and variety of these communities of interest, we are not able to offer bespoke guidance for each club or society. But we can share some general advice which we think is universal and will be relevant to all.

### MEETINGS & GATHERINGS

The *Scottish Government* advises people to avoid crowded places, stay 2m away from others (at time of writing reducing to 1m) and avoid all unnecessary contact. We suggest each club and society explores alternatives to meeting in person, and consider using free, secure digital platforms such as [Microsoft Teams](#) and [Zoom](#) – both used by *University of Glasgow* and *GUSRC* staff - to communicate and stay connected.

Some physical spaces on campus may be opened and become available for in-person meetings in due course. For example, the *GUSRC*'s [Williams Room](#) is one of several spaces, frequently used by clubs and societies that hosts get-togethers. However, room capacities will be reduced to allow safe distancing and access, and there may be other restrictions in place, such as one-way systems.

### SOCIALS

Going out together and socialising is – for many clubs and societies – a key part of how they operate and an attraction for students. We advise committees and social convenors review the *Scottish Government's* [Route Map – What You Can and Cannot Do](#). This speaks directly to shopping, eating and drinking out, and should prove useful. Remember, advice changes regularly so keep up-to-date and review as often as you can.

### TRAVEL

Many clubs and societies travel across country and beyond, taking part in conferences, tournaments and away days. Please see the advice listed above in the 'For Volunteers' section of this document.

### FOOD

Many clubs and societies prepare food for social events, meetings and fundraisers. Per *NHS Inform*, you cannot catch coronavirus from food. But it is possible to catch it if you touch an infected surface or object and then touch your mouth or nose.