Advice for safe volunteering and helping

Setting up a WhatsApp or Facebook group is a great way to maintain contact with volunteers and those who need support with everyday tasks - such as picking up shopping or dog walking - at a neighbourhood level. However, safeguarding yourself and protecting volunteers and other members of the community from harm and preventing the spread of Covid-19 are of the utmost importance.

Below are some safety tips for those who wish to set up a private community WhatsApp or Facebook group:

- Keep groups to a hyper-localised level, to ensure that everyone lives in close proximity and is familiar with each other, and is able to carry out activities on foot, in order to avoid public transport.
- Write a series of rules for members of your group when you set it up for all members to follow. Facebook will allow you to display these rules prominently in your "About" section. For WhatsApp, these rules could be held in a Google Doc and shared with all new members when they request access.
- Create a series of automated questions for those requesting access to a private Facebook group for screening purposes. This could include ensuring that they live within the local area and to see what services they wish to offer or what services they require. To do this, open your Facebook Group in a browser (it won't work via the app), and choose Manage Group, then Edit Group Settings (the button next to the Share feature). Then select the Edit Group Page option, which will allow you to set up your questions.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility
DBS checks
- Carry out DBS checks, it may take longer at this time,
- Keep a log of any incidents and inappropriate behaviour
- Ensure you seek a reference, Most volunteers will understand that you must apply due diligence#
- Keep the relevant posters near by

Making Safeguarding Personal
- It is important to remain "user led", be respectful ask adult service users what they want
- Add our resource page Jahada carries out DBS checks email helpline@hcvs.org.uk or call 07534028144

Referrals
To protect service users or residents at adults at risk
1. **Email adultprotection@hackney.gov.uk**
2. Go to **https://hackney.gov.uk/child-protection**)

<u>Data protection</u>
- <u>Your safety is of the utmost importance and data protection laws are in place for a reason.</u> Urge people to not share any personal information within the group - such as home addresses, phone numbers and email addresses.
- Admins should monitor posts closely and delete any posts with personal information
- The consensual sharing over private messaging of street addresses should only be made between two parties who live within hyperlocal proximity (no more than three streets away).
- Data should not be stored in personal documents, such as Google Spreadsheets or Excel tables.

To avoid spreading Covid-19, urge volunteers to follow the following steps when helping out neighbours.

- Do not carry out any deliveries of tasks if you feel unwell. If you have a high-temperature or a new, continuous cough, follow [Public Health England guidelines](#) and self-isolate.Your safety is of the utmost importance. Don't go into anyone's house and if you make a delivery, stay 2 metres away from the person who is isolation at all times. You can leave any food or goods that you have collected for your neighbour on their doorstep, and communicate with your neighbour through phone or by sending a message.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds or more before and after deliveries, and keep a bottle of hand sanitizer with you if you're out and about
- Ensure that your neighbour and the local shop is within walking distance, to ensure that you avoid using public transport

Safety information for people who need support from volunteers:

In the first instance, you should contact the Council by filling in this [form](#) to let us know how we can help you.

Please be aware that there may be some people who will seek to take advantage of the current situation, so please take heed of the following advice if you need immediate help:

- Seek help from trusted neighbours and friends, or reputable charities, local advice agencies and established faith organisations
- Only give cash to someone you know and trust
- Do not give your bank card and PIN number to anybody
- If you have any concerns about your safety or the safety of another person, or concerns about the genuinity of someone's offer to help you, you can contact Hackney's Adult Safeguarding Service on **adult.protection@hackney.gov.uk** or **020 8356 5782**
- Call the Police on 999 in an emergency

More information about Coronavirus-related scams can be found here.

If you're a resident who needs help, or if you know someone who needs support during the Coronavirus pandemic, please fill in this form to let us know how we can provide the appropriate support and assistance.