Guidance for community groups responding to the Covid-19 outbreak in collaboration with the West Berkshire Community Support Hub

This document is a guide to some of the issues to consider when setting up and running a volunteer group for the delivery of food and medicines to the community.

Scope of role

The purpose of our community groups is to provide responsive, local support to the vulnerable in your area, who are struggling during the Covid-19 outbreak. This relates to those vulnerable and often those extremely vulnerable (i.e. the 'shielded group') that need help with getting basic food and medication whilst self-isolating.

To date we are proud of the incredible response from our local groups across the district. We also want to ensure you are aware that referrals can also be made to the Community Support Hub if you feel you need further support or have a lack of capacity to help match the current demand.

Communicating

If you are overwhelmed by requests for help and cannot manage you must notify the Community Support Hub immediately ecclogistics@westberks.gov.uk.

Communication with your residents will be key in order to reduce the anxiety in those that are self-isolating. Please do everything you can to keep them updated on the situation with regard to their deliveries and if there are any delays explain when they might expect to receive their food and medication.

Try to reserve some delivery slots for emergency or urgent cases and if possible create a small surplus of food supplied that can be accessed and distributed immediately people who are in most critical need. If you cannot help in these cases please notify ecclogistics@westberks.gov.uk as soon as possible.

Data management

The Council Community Support Hub will be maintaining a database of vulnerable residents and also those extremely vulnerable, who due to their health conditions will require 'shielding'. We will be regularly asking you for information regarding who you are helping, etc. It is really important to keep this two-way flow of information going as it is vital for us to ensure we know the needs of the vulnerable people in our district.

General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)

In terms of clarifying the rules around General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) it is possible to share information about your residents with West Berkshire Council for the purposes of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. The basic parameters around data use are as follows:

1. Do not use the data you hold for any purposes incompatible with people's fundamental rights and freedoms. Under the current circumstances your purpose for holding this data is to coordinate the response effort which is vital to public health and wellbeing, so this would not be breaching any fundamental rights or causing harm by storing this data.

2. The law is not designed to obstruct you in getting things done, especially in emergencies, however you must not disclose personal information you are holding to a third party or allow a third party access to information you are holding unless this is strictly necessary to the response effort. **The sharing of any personal data on social media is strictly prohibited and is not an appropriate forum to share personal data even in an emergency.**

3. Limit your processing to only that which is necessary for the duration of this period when you are coordinating the community's response efforts. Resist the temptation to add data to lists for use at a later date as you are currently only collating this information for a very specific and time-bound purpose.

4. Keep data secure and make sure you don't hold it for any longer than is absolutely necessary.

5. Be mindful that some basic practices can help save time and unnecessary controversy. For instance, when sending a mass distribution email, the advice is to use the blind carbon copy (bcc) function to protect the identities of all recipients.

Volunteers and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks

The government has published a Safeguarding and DBS Factsheet (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-factsheet-community-volunteers-during-covid-19-outbreak/safeguarding-and-dbs-factsheet-faqs) which you should read and check for regular updates. Some of you will already have an established a set of volunteers, whilst others may have received offers of help from new individuals. There are many ways to help, but it is important it is done safely for all involved and you will need to take some basic checks of those that have volunteered to help and to confirm their identities.

Many of the roles that volunteers will carry out in their local communities do not raise safeguarding issues and do not need a DBS check. However, having volunteers DBS checked is a prudent safeguarding step. There is, however, no legal requirement for you to have a DBS check. Regardless of whether you choose to have volunteers DBS checked, you should ensure your group follow simple, practical precautions such as working safely (keeping at a safe distance from those self-isolating), keeping records of money spent and providing shopping receipts to safeguard all involved.

Some of your volunteers may have DBS checks obtained through other roles they undertake and you should ask them if this is the case. Although ordinarily a check for a role with children would not be sufficient for working with adults, groups may consider this is a reasonably safe thing to do, based on the information on the check

and the surrounding circumstances. If a previous check applies, you should record that this has been seen.

In addition, you should ask them to confirm their name, date of birth, address and request to see their identification e.g. passport or driving licence. You should also ask their volunteers if they have been barred from working with children and vulnerable adults by the DBS. If they have been barred, then you should not allow them to work closely with children or vulnerable adults.

Lone working

Due to social distancing measures it is likely that your volunteers will be working alone. You should set up a system to ensure that you know where each of the volunteers are going each day and at a minimum you check to ensure that they have finished for the day. This can be done via a simple phone call to say all drops have been completed and they have returned home safely.

Volunteer training

You must make sure that all your volunteers know what is required of them and more importantly what is not. Please, see the flyer drafted for volunteer groups including measures on safe deliveries and ways to reduce any potential risks to the vulnerable or the volunteer helpers. For example, it must be made clear that no volunteer is to enter any resident's home.

General advice

Keep good records of who you are helping and what assistance you are providing.

Know who is visiting which residents and keep records of this in case there are queries.

Follow clear and safe working practices around the handling of money and social distancing.

If possible, allow your volunteers time to be able to have a conversation with each resident they are delivering to, this is good to help boost the morale of those that are self-isolating and is also the best way to find out how they are doing and if they need any extra help.

What to do in certain situations:

If there is no answer at the door

In this situation the volunteer should try to telephone the resident, if possible look through the windows or call over the garden fence to see if you can get a response.

If safe to do so, knock on the neighbours' doors to find out if they are in or if anyone has seen them go out - remember to maintain safe social distancing measures. If you don't get a response then call back later that day, if possible.

If you do not get a response after trying the above options then call 111 and request the police carry out a welfare check. Please also pass this information back to the Community Support Hub.

If you see a person in trouble or on the floor etc. - Dial 999, do not attempt to enter the property but wait for the emergency services to arrive.

Do not leave medication or food on the door step without first making contact with the resident.

If the resident needs more help e.g. in the home/repairs/personal care etc.

This information i.e. the extra help needed, specific details and level of urgency, will need to be fed back to the Community Support Hub who will pass this onto the relevant agency. Please let the resident know this is what you are going to do in order to give them reassurance they will be getting the extra help they require.

If the person can't pick up the parcel

Do not go into the home as this goes against the current safe practices and social distancing measures.

Consider breaking the parcel down into smaller quantities to help, so the individual can lift them up more easily. If it is still a problem then it should be referred back to the Community Support Hub.