



Coronavirus Community Response

Keeping Everyone Safe

A few things to consider when setting up or running Informal Community Groups responding to Covid-19 (Corona Virus)

This guide is meant as a starting point to help volunteers, leaders and those we are helping stay safe. It is not a set of rules to follow but is intended to stimulate thought. Each group will need to create their own ways of working to suit their area and their community. It has been put together to help you avoid unintended negative consequences while you do your best to help those in need.

Misunderstandings and raised tempers can be common in stressful situations. Although everyone's motives within your group are genuine, it is important that you take steps to protect the vulnerable and volunteers from the virus and from malicious/false allegations, stress, overload and abuse.

Things you may need to consider

Who else

- Before doing anything, check if anyone else has already set something up in your area.

Your objectives

- Be clear about what you want to achieve. It might be to help housebound people with shopping, to set up a system to identify and reach out to those in need, and/or to support people facing financial hardship due to loss of income. Your objectives may change over time. Try to ensure that everyone involved understands what you're doing so your activities are coordinated and expectations are managed.

Risks

- Complete a risk assessment – looking at the risk to people being helped, volunteers, organisers. **Please see the attached annex for more guidance or risk assessment.**
- Draw up some simple advice to volunteers and those they are helping to reduce the risk of transmitting the virus. For instance, not entering a home; keeping a safe distance, washing hands before handling shopping.
- What system will you have in place for a volunteer to report someone potentially having the virus?
- What procedures will you follow to reduce the risk from scammers and false accusations? For instance, volunteers never taking a bank card to pay for shopping or to get cash; certain named volunteers dealing with cash; limiting the cost of any shopping; volunteers not entering people's homes; buddying volunteers.

- If the situation continues for a long period, you may also wish to consider having different volunteers help the same person (this reduces inappropriate relationships forming).

Wellness

- Ways to mitigate volunteers receiving calls at inappropriate times of the day and night?
- Ways to reduce the stress and demands on volunteers.
- Have a plan for volunteers coming down with the virus. How will you cover? How will you support the volunteer?

Expectations

- In moments like this everyone wants to help, which means people may put themselves in uncomfortable situations. Make sure all your volunteers are aware of expectations, and that they are not required to do anything beyond the agreed task.
- Will volunteers shop for alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceutical drugs? If you have a policy of not buying alcohol you may wish to consider uncomfortable aspects such as that alcohol withdrawal can be life threatening for someone who is alcohol dependent.
- How will you deal with complaints if a volunteer must substitute products or if items are missing?

Data

- With so much going on, it might be easy to forget that if you hold someone's data (phone number, address, etc) you have a duty to keep this safe. Simple precautions such as password protecting electronic documents and locking away documents will suffice.

Safeguarding

- What criteria will you have as to who can volunteer and how? Older volunteers may be able to help in ways that still allow them to help, even if self-isolating. Will you have a minimum age?
- Will a member of your group act as the safeguarding lead? How will people report concerns? Will you provide your volunteers with information and telephone numbers to report safeguarding concerns?
- What advice will you give volunteers if they are concerned that someone needs medical treatment?
- If you are not a professional involved with the child or family, you do not have to give your name and your conversation will be treated confidentially.
- **For more information on safeguarding including who and how to contact to report a Safeguarding concern in Southwark please see the attached Annex.**

For more advice and support for community groups on other issues contact development@communitysouthwark.org

Community Southwark, 1 Addington Square, London SE5 0HF Tel: 020 7358 7020

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Thanks to the Hunts Forum for sharing their resource with us.

Mutual Aid Safeguarding Policy and Protection Procedures:

A Volunteer's Guide

This is a brief description of the policy and procedures followed by Mutual Aid and it should be read alongside our other guidance

This policy applies to all volunteers or anyone operating on behalf of Mutual Aid

The purpose of this policy:

- To protect individuals who receive our support
- To provide all volunteers with the information and practices to keep them safe

Mutual Aid believes that no one should ever experience abuse of any kind. We are committed to carrying out our work in a way that protects everyone from harm.

We seek to keep people safe by:

- valuing, listening to, respecting and empowering people to tell us if they are suffering harm
- supporting a Lead Safeguarding Officer
- adopting safeguarding practices and a code of conduct for volunteers
- developing and implementing an effective online safety policy and procedures
- providing effective support for volunteers
- recruiting volunteers safely, ensuring necessary checks are made
- recording and storing information professionally and securely in line with data protection regulations
- only sharing concerns and relevant information with agencies who need to know
- managing any allegations against volunteers and users appropriately
- having effective complaints and whistleblowing measures in place

Categories of abuse and how to recognise them

Abuse can take place anywhere, at any time. People may be abused by a wide range of people including relatives and family members, professional staff, paid care workers, volunteers, other service users, neighbours, friends, peers and associates, people who deliberately exploit vulnerable people, and strangers.

Abuse can take many forms, and incidents of abuse may be one-off or multiple, and affect one person or more. Abuse may also be very subtle. You should report concerns relating to the welfare of volunteers and the people we support. It is not down to you to decide if any abuse has occurred or to confront any suspected abuser.

There are normally four main categories of abuse:

- neglect
- physical abuse, including domestic abuse
- emotional or psychological abuse
- sexual abuse

A fifth form of abuse usually applies to adults only:

- financial or material abuse

Some other categories of abuse are:

- human trafficking
- female genital mutilation
- grooming
- online abuse
- bullying
- extremism
- spiritual abuse within faith communities

Many of the signs of abuse will be common and include:

- unexplained injuries or marks, including cuts and bruises
- displaying anti-social behaviour
- suffering from depression or anxiety
- engaging in inappropriate touching or contact
- involved in substance abuse
- isolation from family, friends and carers
- displaying poor appearance and hygiene
- possessing unaccounted for money or goods
- unexplained absences

Recognising abuse can be difficult and it is easy to jump to the wrong conclusions. Not all concerns raised will be abuse. However, this should not prevent you from reporting any concerns that could demonstrate the individual's need for protection.

Practices to be avoided:

The following should be avoided except in emergencies. If cases arise where these situations are unavoidable it should be with the full knowledge and consent of the persons concerned.

- Avoid attending a home delivery drop off alone. This is for your own protection as well as the supported person.

- Avoid sharing personal information outside of Mutual Aid.

Practices never to be sanctioned:

You should never:

- form intimate relationships with the supported person
- engage in physical contact or touching in any way
- enter the supported person's family home
- allow anyone to use inappropriate language unchallenged
- make sexually suggestive comments
- reduce anyone to tears as a form of control
- allow allegations made by anyone to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon

Who to speak to if you have a concern about an individual

If you have any concerns about the welfare or safety of any person we have supported, including siblings or other children in the care of parents or carers, then you should speak to the Safeguarding Lead or another responsible Mutual Aid volunteer who will support you with your concern. It is your responsibility to report and concerns, not to investigate.

Contact details

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Name:

Tel:

Email:

If unavailable:

Name:

Tel:

Email:

Southwark's Safeguarding Agencies

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH brings together a team of multi-disciplinary professionals to deal with all safeguarding concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child.

Tel: 020 7525 1921

Tel: 020 7525 5000 (out of hours)

Email: mash@southwark.gov.uk

MASH Team

Sumner House

Sumner Road

London

SE15 5QS

Local Authority Designated Officer

The LADO (Local Authority Designated Officer) provides advice and guidance to individuals/organisations who have concerns relating to an adult who works with children and young people (including volunteers).

The LADO is located within the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU)

QAU duty number - 020 7525 3297

QAU service manager (LADO) - 020 7525 0689

Head of social work improvement and quality assurance - 020 7525 0387

Reporting abuse or neglect in adults

To report a concern about an adult with care and support needs who is experiencing, or is at risk of, abuse or neglect, contact Southwark Adult Social Care. There are a number of ways you can do this:

- for older people and adults with a physical disability, including older people with a mental illness or impairment (if aged over 65):
 - E: OPPDContaktteam@southwark.gov.uk
 - T: 020 7525 3324
- for adults with a mental illness or impairment (aged 18-65):
 - E: MHContakt@southwark.gov.uk
 - T: 020 7525 0088
- for adults with a learning disability or living with autism:
 - E: LearningDisabilitiesDuty@southwark.gov.uk
 - T: 020 7525 2333

If you are worried about confidentiality you don't have to give your name when reporting concerns about abuse or neglect.

If the child or adult concerned is thought to be in immediate danger, always call the police on 999 first.

I have read and understand the contents of this guidance

Signed.....

Name.....

Date.....

Individual's Protection/Safeguarding Expression of Concern Form

This form should be completed when there is cause for concern and given to the appropriate Protection & Safeguarding individual as soon as possible.

Name of individual concerned about:
Date of birth/ age (if known):
Date and time of incident:
Location of incident:
Date of form completion:
Other persons present:
Details of concern (what was said, observed, heard):
Any action taken and by who:
Other relevant information

Mutual Aid Risk Assessment Process

This is a brief description of the policy and procedures followed by Mutual Aid and it should be read alongside our other guidance

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance on

- How to write a risk assessment
- How to score and evaluate risks
- Monitoring and review of risks

What is risk?

A situation involving exposure to danger

To expose (someone or something valued) to danger, harm, or loss.

A probability or threat of damage, injury, liability, loss, or any other negative occurrence that is caused by external or internal vulnerabilities, and that may be avoided or reduced through pre-emptive action.

It is important to remember that the terms “Hazard” and “Risk” are completely different. **A hazard is** anything to do with the potential to cause harm (where harm is any loss – personal injury, damage, repair cost). **Risk is the** likelihood that harm will occur and its severity.

What is a Risk Assessment?

A systematic assessment of the hazards in the workplace in order to minimise the risks to the health and safety of employees and others.

Why do a Risk Assessment?

You have a moral and legal obligation to protect the people you work with and support and others who may be affected by your activities. It also reduces the likelihood of prosecutions, fines & claims, risks of ill health and the risks of accidents and other incidents. The costs of accidents can be high in terms of injury, compensation and reputation.

How to undertake a risk assessment

- Ensure that all significant hazards and risks are addressed.
- The level of detail should be broadly proportional to the level of risk.

- Eliminate or reduce that risk to the lowest possible level.
- Be undertaken by a competent person or persons.

Steps to take in undertaking a risk assessment

1. Look for hazards and identify the risks.
2. Decide who may be harmed and how.
3. Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards and decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done.
4. Record your findings. Use the template below.
5. Review your assessment from time to time and revise it if necessary.

Evaluating the risks

Evaluate the risks arising from the hazards. Decide whether existing precautions are adequate or more should be done. Here is a simple way to assess the risk.

Multiply the likelihood of each hazard by the severity to arrive at the rating. The higher the rating the more you should do to mitigate or reduce the risk down to a more acceptable level, especially if the activity has a rating in the red zone. The severity can also be looked in terms of financial or reputational loss.

As the the Hierarchy of Controls diagram shows, different actions can deliver a range of effectiveness. For firefighters, for example, entirely eliminating the risk is not feasible. But actions around isolation and working practices, equipment and PPE can reduce the risks to lower levels than would otherwise be the case.

	Minor Injury	>3 day injury	Major injury
Slight Chance	1	2	3
Frequent	2	4	6
Extremely likely	3	6	9



Record your findings

When writing down your results keep it simple, for example 'Fume from welding: local exhaust ventilation used and regularly checked'

Review your risk assessment

- On a regular basis
- If there is reason to suspect it is no longer valid.
- If there are significant changes in the matters to which the assessment relates.
- If there has been an accident.

What to look for (some examples)

- Ergonomics and human factors
- Fatigue
- Health surveillance
- Activity related stress
- Drugs and alcohol
- Violence
- Food preparation
- Finance matters
- Travel

