Practical guidance for community groups

Dealing with coronavirus

Last updated: 25 March 2020

> The guidance below is intended as a guide for any groups and organisations who run services and activities for residents in community settings.
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> It should be read alongside the regularly updated guidance from the government which can be found here: https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/coronavirus-covid-19-uk-government-response, and NHS advice for keeping yourself and others safe which can be found here: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/.

First - keep yourselves safe

- This is a highly infectious virus and if you become infected, you are likely to infect others. By keeping yourselves safe, you help stop the spread and keep people around you safe.
- If you are looking to shift your focus towards providing support and services for those affected by covid-19, ensure to adhere to government safely guidelines regarding social distancing. Please do not help if you are unwell.
- Your volunteers and any staff should be advised and supported to follow this guidance to keep themselves safe and well.

Adapt, innovate

- Can you adapt how you deliver your activity or service to keep your users safe? Can you move online? Can you use technology? Can you operate remotely? Many activities and services have stopped and this is having a big social impact. If you can adapt to provide a reduced service which can be run safely, this will be hugely beneficial.
- This adaptation applies to behind-the scenes-activities like committee meetings, as well as offering essential public services.
- If you decide to adapt your service to offer specific support during the outbreak please contact community@norwich.gov.uk for help and guidance on how you can access support and get involved.

Communication

- We need to keep communicating with our users, partners and Trustees. Make sure you have contact details to hand and a way where people can find out information.
- There are a number of different tools available to assist with communication between your Trustees and committee members. Free video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Skype are available – plus emails and phone calls!
- For your members: Facebook (closed groups) and WhatsApp are both good options depending on size.
- You'll also need to consider people who don't have access to mobile phones or the internet.
- With activities temporarily closed, how are you maintaining contact with fellow volunteers and users? Plus you'll need to consider how to get word out when you are able to restart.

Financial impact

- For many groups, there will be a financial impact. Use your reserves – they're there for this purpose, and speak to your funders about pausing delivery.
- NVCO have some helpful online information on how to help reduce the impact.
- Norfolk Community Foundation are setting up a fund for donations. This fund will support existing voluntary and community groups with core funding to sustain and grow services which support those affected by the outbreak. This fund is coming soon but will be available on this link: https://www.norfolkfoundation.com/giving-philanthropy/

More detailed guidance can be found online, of particular help to you are:

NCVO guidance for community groups coping with the impact of the coronavirus outbreak: https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus

Plus there is a wide range on information and guidance on LUMi ranging from support for individuals, community groups and employers to how you can help support your local community: https://www.lumi.org.uk/resources/resources-and-toolkits/coronavirus-help-and-guidance/

Finally if you are running an existing community group in Norwich and need further guidance and advice, do contact community@norwich.gov.uk for further information.

Please keep yourselves safe during this time.