

Wellbeing & Community Aid North Lincs - Safeguarding Procedure

We are a group of individuals providing connections, support and a facility to the mutual aid groups across the county. We are all doing this on an individual basis. This document is to support groups, admins and individuals.

If you are exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, if you may have been in contact recently with someone who is, or if you're part of an at-risk group (elderly, immunocompromised, etc.), please follow all necessary precautions issued by the UK government and the NHS and do not provide in person support.

Whilst much of the below will be common sense, we wish to take sensible precautions when connecting isolated people and volunteers to assess risk and to protect the safety and welfare of those who receive and offer help.

In such non-hierarchical groups, there is no 'formal leader'. We all share responsibility and accountability. Risk assessments will help us to learn and avoid repeat incidents.

Safeguarding does not include medical advice on infection control. The NHS website should be the first port of call.

We do not want to connect unverified volunteers and isolated people without an appropriate procedure to minimise risk and make clear accountability. As such, whenever we receive a request for support, we take the following steps to protect our members, our volunteers, and the people we aim to help.

1. Moderate the Facebook group as a space for discussion.
 - a. We empower a trusted team of moderators to maintain an active watch over behaviour in the group, endeavouring to ensure that all members are safe from abuse and harassment.
 - b. We encourage members of the group to report behaviour that is suspicious or in breach of the group's rules so that the matter can be investigated.
 - c. In the event of a moderator or admin abusing their privileges, we advise that members contact other members of the team directly, so that the matter can be investigated.

2. Minimise the data we hold and the accessibility of our records.
 - a. We only ask for data we need to carry out our goals: for example, we might keep a record of a volunteer's phone number so that we can contact them to ask if they are available for a job and address to understand which requests for help are nearer to them to minimise risk.
 - b. Wellbeing and Community Aid North Lincs admin hold this in one central document and then each administrator of each area holds their data in one central document (only the data which relates to their area), which is maintained and accessible only by the administration team.
 - c. When there is no further need for our work, we will delete all the information we hold on volunteers and those who have requested our support and instruct all volunteers who have received information in pursuit of our goals to do the same.
 - d. Anyone whose data we hold has the right to request that we delete their data.
 - e. We will not pass anyone's data to another organisation or person outside of this group without their consent.

- f. We endeavour to ensure that any data we hold will not be transferred outside of the EEA.
3. Make personal contact with those requesting support.
 - a. The first action taken on receipt of a request is for a member of the administration team to make contact with the person requesting support to gauge their needs and apprise them of our Safeguarding Procedure.
 - b. In the event that a person's needs fall outside the scope of this group as an association of non-specialist volunteers, our central team will advise them of all local services known to us which might be able to support them.
4. Ensure more than one volunteer is aware of a request for help. This is a 'buddy system'.
 - a. We aim to minimise the chance of a single volunteer exploiting anyone by letting each person requesting support know that there are multiple people supporting them, and letting them know the names of the volunteers. Each volunteer should be partnered with at least one other volunteer in a 'buddy system'.
 - b. Due to the rules around social distancing, it is not possible for volunteers to work in pairs, however, when working on a request, it is important that a volunteer keeps one of their other volunteers up-to-date whilst carrying out their activities. This could be via an active phone call. This minimises the risk to our volunteers when carrying out their work.
 - c. We encourage volunteers to coordinate with each other and to report anything suspicious to the coordinators.
5. Recommend 'Standard Precautions' in line with official guidelines, as follows:
 - a. Always work in pairs (this may be remotely in a member of your own family is not supporting you due to the social distancing rules in place).
 - i. See 2.
 - b. Wear gloves, and keep a minimum 2m distance from others. Also use hand sanitiser on hands and clean all items such as phone etc as regularly as possible.
 - i. We aim to minimise the chance of spreading an asymptomatic infection.
 - c. Make sure your 'buddy' knows what your plans are and what you are doing. If you have requested help, where possible, please advise someone that you are receiving help from one of our volunteers.
 - i. We encourage all volunteers and people requesting support to ensure that someone they trust knows what their plans are, in case of emergency.
 - d. Do not enter anyone's/allow anyone to enter your house.
 - i. We encourage all volunteers and people requesting support to be mindful of their own security at all times.
 - e. When receiving payment for items, it is recommended that payment is made following purchase of goods. Receipts should always be obtained and given to the person you have aided. For those areas which have an Open Collective fund, it is recommended that this is the first form of payment considered

whereby the person you're helping pays into the fund and you claim the amount out as an expense. If this is not available or possible, it is recommended that money is transferred electronically to volunteers or paid over the phone with the company where the items are being collected from. If this is not possible and cash needs to be given, full protocol should be maintained to wash hands and disinfect. Ensure you do not touch your face prior to carrying out these health and safety measures.

- f. Please ensure you do not over promise and manage everyone's expectations accordingly.
6. To protect both volunteers and the public, every time a request for help is actioned, this must be updated on our website using the form. Photos of receipts should be uploaded when these are available for your records too as the original receipt will be provided to the member of the public we have supported.
 7. Collecting prescriptions
 - a. This is a high-risk activity. Many prescriptions have a high street value. Arrangements should be made between neighbours who know one another well (relationships with neighbours will, of course, develop), or through a registered organisation. We hope that volunteers will also be able to learn about official systems for prescription delivery that are being offered by pharmacies, and inform the group.
 - b. You should collect prescriptions for people you do not know only if there is no alternative. If you send someone to collect a prescription, it's extra important to follow up with the neighbour. Disabled People Against Cuts recommends the following process (this may not always be possible but it is important to follow whenever possible):
 - i. Task organiser should ensure that prescriptions are collected in pairs (due to the social distancing rules, this will not be possible so it is asked that you keep in contact with your 'buddy' at all times).
 - ii. Volunteers should contact the task organiser (a) when they have collected the prescription AND (b) delivered it to the recipient
 - iii. Task organiser should contact the individual in need to confirm that the prescription was received before deleting the request from any request log.
 - c. Do not give prescription advice for any medication. This should be provided only by the over-the-counter pharmacist.
 - d. Please buy only the amount of over-the-counter medicine requested, and never buy more than the legal maximum quantity allowed. For some medicines this has been reduced since the virus took hold.
 8. Delivering home cooked food
 - a. Food preparation hygiene regulations must be followed. Ideally, someone in the kitchen should have a Level 2 Food Hygiene Certificate, and the kitchen owner/manager needs a Level 3 Certificate. Ideally, food preparation should be kept very local e.g. at street level and between known neighbours. We recommend disinfecting food containers.
 9. If you have concerns about individuals:
 - a. Draw on the experience of professionals / people in the area e.g. teachers, social workers – but do not share people's personal data.

- b. Concerns about children should be communicated straight to local safeguarding professionals.
- c. Concerns about adults are more complex. Again, seek local qualified support.
- d. If you have concerns about Facebook group members, contact one of the group moderators.
- e. If you have concerns about any of the moderators, please contact one of the other moderators.
- f. Watch out for any phone / email scammers targeting older people and proffering refunds / tax rebates and attributing these to COVID-19.

10. Reporting Incidents

- a. In non-hierarchical groups such as WhatsApp and Mutual Aid groups, people should feel free to share incidents or problems locally with 'task organisers', group admins, or if relevant more broadly, post them on the Facebook group. It will also be important to develop an Incident Reporting Tool as part of the Risk Assessment (in progress), with clear actions and accountabilities for avoiding repeat incidents
- b. However, do bear in mind the following:
 - i. The victim may not always want the incident communicated. Never share victims' names or identifying information.
 - ii. Sometimes, it is not possible to be 100% sure that the incident in question did occur. If the identity of the 'accused' is shared, it must be on a 'need-to-know' only basis i.e. only people who are likely to be in contact with them in the future