

# Connecting Communities of Interest During COV-19

#TogetherLeeds #PositivePartnerships

## Communities of Interest Network Information for the Central and Local Hubs

Building on trusted relationships with local community organisations and the richness and diversity of our Third Sector in Leeds, we are using our networks of community-based organisations to support the flow of information to the communities they already work. Through this we aim to ensure that information and support relating to Covid-19 can reach the most marginalised and vulnerable communities in Leeds.

There is a lot of information about Covid-19, including health and care information, volunteering support information and other messages which can be confusing and we know some people and communities experience additional barriers to accessing and using this.

Importantly will ensure that organisations tell us about the queries, issues and resilience of communities regarding Covid-19 so we can feed back for decision makers across our Leeds system to respond.

Lead and support organisations have been identified to play a key role in the flow of information to and from organisations supporting acting as a 'Link organisation' to work with other organisations connected with each community of interest within Leeds (we are calling these organisations Supporting Organisations). Information about what the role of Link organisations is included over the page.

### What do we mean by 'Communities of Interest'?

'Communities of Interest' are groups of people who share an identity, for example people with a learning disability, or those who share an experience, for example the homeless community. We have initially identified the following communities of interest who experience additional barriers to communication, however we will continue identify additional groups.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Women and maternity</li><li>• People with experience of Domestic Abuse</li><li>• Homeless people</li><li>• LGBT+ Communities</li><li>• Mental Health Support needs</li><li>• People with a Learning Disability</li><li>• People with Physical or Sensory Impairments</li><li>• Men's mental health</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrant Communities</li><li>• Gypsy, Traveller and Roma people</li><li>• People leaving prison</li><li>• People from Black Asian and Minority Communities</li><li>• People with mobility issues</li><li>• People with Drug or Alcohol issues</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Single Parents</li><li>• Unpaid Carers</li><li>• Young People (inc Care Leavers)</li><li>• Older People</li><li>• Sex Workers</li><li>• People with Drug or Alcohol issues</li><li>• People with Physical or Sensory Impairments</li></ul>
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You can access support and guidance from the organisations through Forum Central:  
[communities@forumcentral.org.uk](mailto:communities@forumcentral.org.uk) 0113 2421321



Through organisations with links with into communities, we aim to ensure that all people in Leeds have access to clear, accessible and consistent information which can help keep us all safe.

### **Organisations in the network are asked to:**

- Be a source of specialist advice, guidance, signposting and communication for others in the system. This includes being a resource to the Ward Volunteer Hub Managers via the Central Helpline, if for example there are questions about how best to meet the cultural or practical needs
- Be a link partner in the communication network to help get info out to people
- Disseminate information to the people from their community of Interest contacts and partners through emails, social media and phone calls to help get info out to citizens
- Feed information up through us about barriers, issues and disproportionate or differential impacts of Covid-19 so we can keep the city networks informed and so we can support and respond to need
- Let us know of practical or financial support we can offer to support communities of Interest

### **What Support and Resources will be available?**

We are monitoring whether if additional resources are required. A number of organisations may be able to redirect funding, for example from Public Health and we have some funding we can access if required.

### **How can we Share our Knowledge and Learning?**

The response of people in Leeds to the Covid-19 crisis has been exceptional, and we want to make sure that we don't lose vital information and learning as the programme develops. We recognise that this is a 'test and learn' approach, which will change as the situation develops.

Forum Central is capturing data and stories from the Communities of Interest Network Links in order to keep a track of our local response and impact. We hope to be able to build on this work in the future, and ensure that the crisis leads to long term positive outcomes for people and communities across the city.

### **Join up with other work in the city and the wider #TogetherLeeds approach, this includes:**

**Leeds Shielding Support Team** – The Communities of Interest Network is part of this team

The network will connect with **Healthwatch's #WeeklyCheckIn** programme designed to hear, week by week, what people are experiencing and bring together the intelligence from all the different parts of the health and care People Voice system is hearing including from PALS, Complaints, other engagement activities. Real-time intelligence will help make the city respond to needs and put measures in place.

**Leeds Community Care Volunteer Hub** - Leeds City Council have set up a central contact number **0113 37 81877** to take calls and enquiries from individuals, groups and organisations who either need access to help and support or can offer help and support. Calls are triaged according to need to ensure that people get help locally or offer help locally.

**Community Care Volunteering** - The Community Care Volunteering programme brings together people who are able to help with tasks such as shopping deliveries, preparing meals or making check-in phone calls with those who are self-isolating or in need of support. It is being run by Leeds City Council and Voluntary Action Leeds (VA-L) to ensure systems are in place to care for people and communities during the spread of coronavirus, known officially as Covid-19 and to address likely gaps in social care for children, families and vulnerable adults across Leeds.

**Ward Volunteer Hub managers** receive requests from the central contact team for local support and co-ordinate requests from local organisations. They also distribute information and advice and other resources in the locality and link with the Emergency Food Provision available for families and individuals who are experiencing difficulties in **accessing food due to financial difficulties or self-isolation.**

Forum Central is working in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds (VA-L), Healthwatch and Leeds City Council to support this network of community-based organisations