

# Connecting Communities of Interest During COV-19

#TogetherLeeds #PositivePartnerships

## Leeds Communities of Interest Network - Link Organisation Information Pack

Thank you for supporting the community response to Covid-19. Over the coming months this support will be vital 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 how to escalate concerns to decision makers. But, we know some people and communities experience additional barriers to accessing and using this.

Forum Central is working in partnership with Voluntary Action Leeds (VA-L), Healthwatch and Leeds City Council Communities Team to form a network of community-based organisations who can be a 'link' to support the flow of information to the 'Communities of Interest' they already work with.

You are receiving this information pack as your organisation has agreed to be a link to a particular Community of Interest.

### 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

- Women and maternity
- Domestic Abuse
- Homeless people
- LGBT+ Communities
- Mental Health Support
- People with a Learning Disability
- Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Migrant Communities
- Gypsy & Traveller communities
- Men's health
- People leaving prison
- BAME Communities
- People with mobility issues
- People with Physical and Sensory Impairments
- Single Parents
- Carers
- Young People (including Care Leavers)
- Older People
- Sex Workers
- People with Drug and Alcohol issues

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



## What is the Link organisation role?

Our ask of you as the Communities of Interest Network Link is to:

- Be a link partner in the communication network to help get info out to people in communities
- Disseminate information to the people from your community of Interest contacts and partners through emails, social media and phone calls to help get info out to people
- Feed information up through us so we can keep the city networks informed and so we can support and respond to need
- 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 of people from the community you link with
- Let us know of practical or financial support we can offer to support your communities of Interest

## What Support and Resources will be available to us?

Please record the details of resources that your organisation invests in this work throughout your delivery so they can be taken into account and 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 will capture 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.

## How will this work join up with other work in the city?

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. The real-time intelligence we gather at this crucial time will help make the city respond to needs and put measures in place, in particular for people from more Leeds marginalised.

## The network is part of the wider #TogetherLeeds approach, this includes:

**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.