



## Advice for small community groups in Manchester

At this time with the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak you will no longer be able to run your existing activities and services in the same way. As a community group it is important for you to keep everyone safe through good hygiene and physical distancing (also known as social distancing) – this means cancelling activities, changing services and working differently to support your volunteers and the people you help. Whatever you do it is critical you follow [NHS England advice guidelines](#) on keeping yourself and others safe at all times.

We've put together some guidance for the best ways you can offer your support.

### What you can do

This can be a worrying time for your volunteers and the people you help and whilst suspending activities is necessary think about other things you can do:

#### Volunteers

- Your volunteers may not be able to do their usual activities – consider are there other things they can do over the phones or online? Or activities they can do whilst maintaining physical distance?
- If you don't have anything for them to do you could encourage them to be a Good Neighbour on their street
- If your volunteer is self-isolating, consider calling them by phone on a regular basis or contacting them through social media to check how they are doing and see if they need help
- It's important your volunteers feel connected and know they are supported, so when the time comes to resume normal activities they know when and how they can get involved

#### People you support

- A lot of people you have supported will have come to your activities to meet people and reduce their social isolation
- However, these people may also be vulnerable and / or in groups at high risk and may need to self-isolate
- Consider calling them by phone on a regular basis or contacting them through social media to check how they are doing and see if they need



help. A friendly phone call can make a big difference to someone's wellbeing

- It is important for the people you support to know that there are people looking out for them and that when time comes to resume normal activities they will be kept informed

### **Other things you can do**

- Set up a WhatsApp group for your volunteers / people you support to keep in touch
- Set up a closed Facebook group for your volunteers / people you support to interact
- Send them a letter by post to let them know what support you can give them
- Send out a weekly newsletter to keep them posted with developments

If you are worried about a person you can call the Manchester Central Hub on 0800 234 6123 Monday to Saturday 8.30am-5.30pm or email:

[COVIDSupport@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:COVIDSupport@manchester.gov.uk)

### **How to get involved**

There are other ways you can get involved across Manchester and we are coordinating a number of efforts:

#### **Your volunteers**

You can sign-up to join our Covid-19 Community Volunteer [mailing list](#) and keep up-to-date with current volunteering opportunities in the city of Manchester.

#### **Your group**

We have lots of people are getting in touch wanting to support the voluntary sector in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. That's why we've set up the Covid-19 Community Volunteer Programme to help coordinate what we see as the biggest act of organised kindness in our city's history. To make sure that this is as effective as possible, we want to know from you, what support would be of most help to you right now. [Sign up here](#)



### **COVID-19 Mutual Aid and Community Response Groups**

Across the country, people are organising into informal groups of volunteers in response to the COVID-19 outbreak in order to help and support people in their local area. These groups are often called 'mutual aid groups', but can be called anything, and if you are interested in joining or setting up one of these groups, or are part of one of these groups and want some advice and support, [sign up here](#).

### **Donations**

#### **Big Change MCR**

Fundraised donations to Big Change MCR provide homeless people who have rough slept in the city with resources to acquire the practical items they need to build new lives off the streets and which support long-term change. For example, these resources include: deposits for homes, employment-related training courses, clothes for job interviews, furnishings for new accommodation, household items, travel costs, etc. [Donate here](#)

#### **Migrant Destitution Fund**

The Migrant Destitution Fund supports migrant people who have 'no recourse to public funds' - a policy which leaves people unable to meet their basic needs, not supported by the state and not allowed to do paid work to support themselves. People supported by the Fund are mostly asylum seekers and people whose right to remain isn't recognised by the Home Office (e.g. because a relationship breaks down). Many eventually win the right to remain...but it is a long process. It traps people in destitution. [Donate here](#)

### **How we can support your group**

Macc will remain open during this time, but we will be operating differently. Our events and training courses have been postponed for the time being and will be rearranged for later in the year. Our phone line 0333 321 3021 will be open from 10am-4pm Monday to Friday. You can email us any time at: [info@mcrcommunitycentral.org](mailto:info@mcrcommunitycentral.org). We will be able to offer phone call meetings, email correspondence and online support.

### **Capacity Building support**

You may have some time on your hands and might want to take the opportunity to do the things you don't get round to including:

- Establishing your group



- Choosing a structure
- Finding and applying for funding
- Developing a business place
- Community Asset Transfer
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of a Committee / Board member
- Setting a clear vision / strategy

We will be able to help you over the phone, by email or through online means.

The priority for you at this time is to keep yourself, your volunteers and people who use your services safe.

And when you need support we are here to help you.