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Please pass to your Business Manager - Important information.

One West – COVID-19 - Council Set up of Volunteer Services



Many Town Councils are trying to establish volunteer outreach services to those who are self-isolating with Covid-19.

You might be aware the Government is now promoting the use of volunteers to supplement statutory services in the Coronavirus Bill.

The information is here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-bill-summary-of-impacts/coronavirus-bill-summary-of-impacts#section-3--containingslowing-the-virus>

We have been asked about data protection requirement when engaging volunteers.

The ICO has provided guidance that it is unlikely to penalise organisations for a failure to meet the high usual required standard of data protection compliance whilst COVID-19 remains the most pressing concern. However, it is not known how far this will extend, and it is also likely organisations will need to go as far as they reasonably can to meet the usual required standard.

To help we have developed a draft template that can be sent to people signing up to receive a volunteer service to explain how their data will be handled. This is attached.

In setting up a volunteer service it will also be important for Councils to risk assess activities and check their insurance provisions. It also needs to be made clear to volunteers that there is no contractual employment relationship.

Volunteers also need some guidelines as to what is expected of them so we have listed some of the things we think are important. This is not exhaustive but should help you. Of course it should be accompanied with specific instruction related to the service itself.

Good general practice would include:

- Wearing official volunteer lanyards and providing a contact number at the Council if the volunteer's identity is queried
 - Providing a contact number for volunteers to ring if they can't carry out their visits
 - Following government advice if they show symptoms or have a family member who is ill
 - Following government guidance for regular handwashing and sanitation.
 - Not going within 2 metres of a person who needs help and leaving shopping on the doorstep.
 - Procedures around dog walking
 - Procedures for paying for shopping
 - Not providing any healthcare advice –and referring instead to 111 or 999.
 - Reporting if they feel at risk or become aware of information that may others at risk
 - A procedure for expenses (or making it clear that none may be claimed)
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There are also some specifics relating particularly to data protection.

These include:

- Keeping personal information in a safe place where it is not accessible to others.
- Ensuring documents and personal details, in particular are not left unattended in a visible place – for example on car seats and are not kept in a vehicle overnight.
- Awareness of a procedure for breach reporting (who to contact).
- Not storing details on shared personal devices (for example those used by family members).
- Password protecting devices and keeping them safe.
- Only contacting the person(s) that they are helping with their agreement and in accordance with their instructions.
- Not sharing confidential information with anyone who does not need to know it but sharing information with statutory agencies such as social care, police and health services if there is a risk of harm.
- Implementing procedures for destroying the information when the service ends – for example deletion from devices and handing back hard copies to the Council for destruction

We hope this is of some help. Please contact us if in need of further advice.

Thanks

The One West Team



