TOP TIPS FOR VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

These are not comprehensive, but a guide. As circumstances change and as our communal learning develops, we will continue to update this information.

- Make sure that volunteers know that they do not have to continue to volunteer if they are concerned or unsure at a later stage.

- Encourage volunteers to take all possible precautions to protect themselves and the wider community.

- Identify all those whose role will be coordinating the volunteers, to provide regular communications and updates and ensure they maintain and disseminate accurate and up to date information. We're hearing some great things about organisations using digital tools to help their staff and volunteers work and communicate remotely. If this all feels a bit new and daunting, CAST Tech4Good have put some great resources together on Remote Working (https://medium.com/wethecatalysts/how-to-work-remotely-in-a-time-of-coronavirus-19603e363ec9), Remote Meetings (https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-dZatSZTc9cNcVa_CxnmJfXt_UxN3fbt/view) and there is access to FREE digital advice from Digital Candle (https://www.digitalcandle.org.uk/).

- Evaluate your current situation. You may need to consider new ways of running services and how you will support these services and volunteers. It is time to be creative - what volunteer activities and roles can be sustained; what new roles are needed; can volunteers be redeployed / retrained?

- Most crises see offers of help from people who may not ordinarily have volunteered. This can come from all communities and all walks of life. People want to feel they can do something useful. Staying accessible, promoting inclusion and diversity can offer you more access to potential volunteers.

- Risk assess volunteer activities: What is level of risk to volunteers and level of risk to service users and staff.

- Risk assess volunteers: Do any volunteers have underlying health issues that you are concerned about? In what alternative ways can people volunteer?

- For your existing volunteers who are no longer able to come to work or go to visit people: Are there other ways that they can stay involved, for example, moving their face-to-face contact to digital or telephone, calling people and securing donations/volunteers for event more than a few months away, writing case studies of their volunteering journey, writing publicity you can share.

- Check your insurance is up to date and covers all age ranges you may now be recruiting from.

- Review your recruitment, induction and support procedures for volunteers to ensure they are relevant and useful. While the process of gathering information from volunteers will need to be flexible, make sure that you have some basic details and keep them safe.

- Check your health and safety procedures are up to date and applicable for the current crisis.

- Try and manage volunteer expectations. Current volunteers may want to know what they can do in the immediate timeframe.

- New volunteers will be hoping to volunteer immediately but

  Let people know that it may take some time for you to identify your priorities

  This will be a rapidly changing situation.

  - Make sure that volunteers know that things may change at any time. Keep up good, open and clear communications.

  - Plan ahead: Be prepared for volunteers' commitments to change and think about what you can do in these circumstances.

  - Don't forget the people who have been volunteering for you and are not currently able to volunteer: Check in with them – they have given their time to you (email; phone; advise them to self-isolate; signpost them to support systems).

Volunteering Promotion

If you have roles that you need to fill, please register them on our website (if you need help with this, email volunteering@msva.org.uk).

Community Development Support & Advice

We have suspended our face-to-face Drop-in sessions until further notice. However, our Community Development Coordinators are still available via phone and email:

- Sasha Brown (Tues to Thurs) - Tel: 07471 1032937, email: sasha.brown@msva.org.uk

- Julia Beckett (Mon to Wed) - Tel: 07471 032938, email: julia.beckett@msva.org.uk

UKVPMS: e-group for volunteer managers

For how to join this group, email ukvpms@yahoogroups.com

Please let us know if you are on any other useful networks.