

COVID-19 Communications Plan

Voluntary Action Angus

March 2020

Background

As you will be aware, the World Health Organisation has declared a pandemic over the COVID-19 outbreak.

This communications plan underpins the organisation's 'Solidarity Response' document around;

- Engaging people
- Act local
- Focus on hospitals
- Maintain services

Our local response aims to unleash local support; co-ordinate efforts; activate networks; and use reliable sources of information.

VAA's role will be to co-ordinate and support volunteering effort in partnership with our other voluntary, statutory and independent sector colleagues. We aim to maximise the volunteer resource in our communities across Angus, to make sure people in their homes who need support are helped. We will do this, first of all, by doing all we can to keep people safer regardless of whether they are receiving or providing support, and our focus will be on health, poverty and hunger.

We are part of the local contingency arrangements and this brief communications plan will outline our current focus and communication links and priorities.

We appreciate that communities are eager to pull together to help and we aim to support those communities and individuals to make sure no one is left behind.

In VAA, we believe kindness, compassion, respect and dignity are integral to our work. We believe that Angus is a community that actively cares.

Volunteer Priorities and Roles

Volunteer Health Responders – these would be local people who volunteer in the event of significant challenges such as the 'pandemics' situation we face. Their focus will be on supporting older/vulnerable people and complementing/adding capacity to services.

Volunteer drivers – getting messages/medicines and other resources out to people

Meals – adding capacity to meal deliveries. This may become focussed on supporting efforts to provide an alternative for free school meals if schools close

Telephone befrienders and support – key to maintaining good mental health and wellbeing for people in isolation

Volunteer access point for Health Centres

Expanding the roles of social prescribers/ local coordinators

Internal Communications

We need to make sure our internal communications are robust and fit-for-purpose. This will make sure we keep our teams safe and effective, whilst safeguarding recipients of support.

We will follow NHS Scotland and NHS Tayside's public health guidance and issue updates when required. Staff are expected to follow instructions on hand sanitisation, self-isolation, and protecting the health of others – you have an enormous degree of personal responsibility here and we need to trust each other.

Make sure you follow the lone working policy.

Meetings

Operational meetings

Our meetings will focus on strategic and operational matters relating to COVID-19 contingency planning. They might be face-to-face or via tools like Skype or Zoom, for example, but we need to make sure our locality teams know what they are doing and how to do it safely so this includes any training and liaising with community groups.

This means our Board meetings are suspended until further notice. We will keep our Board directors informed. One of our Board members is currently supporting communications in VAA to relieve pressure on the chief officer and the deputy chief officer.

Partners

Our chief officer and deputy chief officer have been liaising with partners already and this work is ongoing as we identify resources, priorities and key actions.

These partners include:

- Third sector partners and the Third Sector Collaborative
- Angus Health and Social Care Partnership
- Angus Council, including Children and Learning and Housing
- The independent care sector
- Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
- Police Scotland

Existing operational communications links will remain in place – we recognise in these situations, they are even more important and we will remain vigilant to make sure they are fit for purpose. Ongoing review.

Volunteers

We are actively recruiting more volunteers and we are encouraging community groups and individuals to liaise with VAA, appointing a single point of contact within communities eager to help so we can maximise the resources and make sure we reach all those who need help. We need to make sure all we do is confidential, that

GDPR is central and that our volunteers have any training and support we can provide.

For example, people who receive care packages in their own homes from health and social care, who might require additional support. Communities on their own may not who these people are - using VAA to co-ordinate makes sure no one is forgotten.

We aim to manage this on a locality basis as outlined in the graphic (1). Within this model, we aim to take a 'My Street' volunteering approach to minimise travel arrangements for volunteers and to build community resilience and familiarity in that neighbourhood.

Locality contacts:

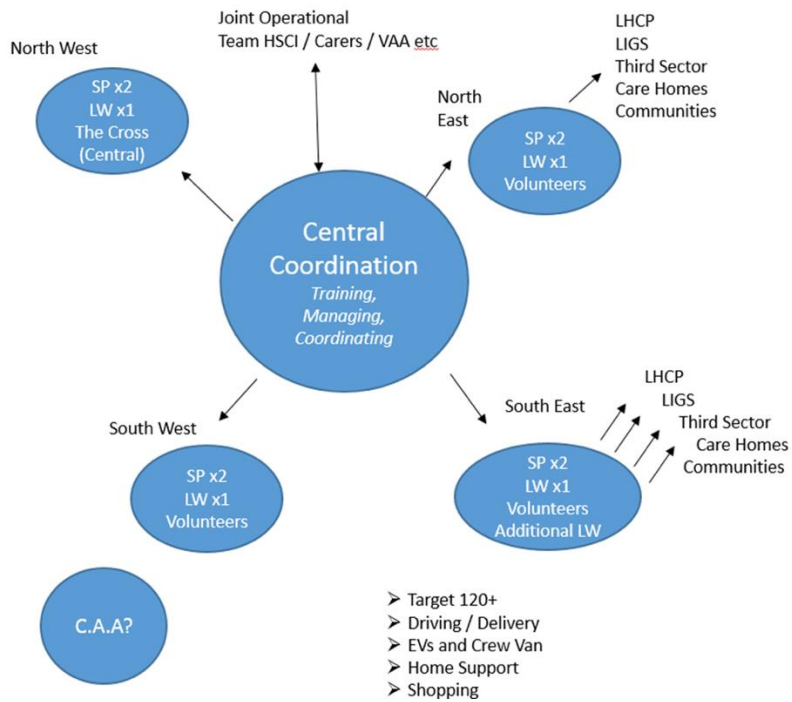
- North West- The Cross Head quarters – info@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk – 01307 466113
- North East – Deborah Benson – deborah@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk - 07717111208
- South West – Clive Goldstraw – clive@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk/info@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk - 0752619966
- South East – Regan Low – regan@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk - 07843231965

Strategic Contacts:

Gary Malone – 01307 466113 gary@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk

Hayley Mearns - 01307 466113 hayley@voluntaryactionangus.org.uk

VAA INTERNAL



As plans develop, we will keep staff, the Board and partners updated. Good communications is a two-way process. If you have questions or ideas, please let your manager know and feed it into planning.

Cllr Julie Bell

VAA Board member