**Checklist for COVID-19 policy amendments**

This document has been designed for youth organisations that have moved all or part of their youth services online. The document outlines which policies you will need to revisit and update considering the COVID-19 crisis and provide some suggestions for these updates.

**Safeguarding policy**

Your organisation will need to add a section in your overarching safeguarding policy that clearly states the following…

* You will be delivering youth work online during the COVID lockdown
* Which online platforms / applications you will be utilising
* How you will gain consent from parents/carers for the child to take part (if they are under 18 years old)
* The procedure for reporting concerns if this was previously completed in person or via a hard copy form (staff, young people and parents/carers)
* You have undertaken a safeguarding risk assessment for using each application to plan on using and what control measures you have implemented as a result
* Staff ratios for online sessions and that staff have clear pre-assigned roles
* Staff still require safeguarding training at this time and the organisation will access this online.
* References current government guidance (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers/coronavirus-covid-19-safeguarding-in-schools-colleges-and-other-providers>)
* You remain committed to safeguarding the children and young people you work with.

**Safer Recruitment policy**

If you are recruiting new staff or volunteers during the COVID-19 Lockdown and are now doing this online via apps such as Teams, Skype or Zoom, you will need to add this information to your safer recruitment policy and the safer recruitment section in your safeguarding policy.

You should consider what additional safety checks you are putting in place to ensure a candidate is suitable to work with children and young people. It is vital that you continue to DBS check all successful applicants and ensure no one starts work for your organisation until this check has come back and you are satisfied that they are safe. You may want to add something to your safeguarding policy that states that no new staff or volunteers will be the lead worker for any online youth work delivery and that they will always be accompanied by a trusted lead.

Another thing to consider is, adding more questions to your interviews that probe a little deeper as you will not have the luxury of meeting your candidates in person. Meeting people in person and assessing how they interact in a professional environment is part of the interview process so adding more questions about work environment or how they communicate with others may be useful here.

You will also need to increase the length of your interviews for two reasons; firstly you are adding questions which will obviously mean they are longer and secondly, you need to take into account that undertaking interviews online will take longer as there may be glitches or signal errors, you or your candidates may have I.T issues and when speaking online people need to wait to see if the person they are talking to has finished before they respond. This time will need to be added to your interview schedules.

**Data Protection and GDPR policy**

If your organisation is now using online platforms to communicate with children and young people, you will need ensure that this is covered in your Data Protection /GDPR policy.

If you are using audio or video recording functions when working with young people you need to mention this in your policy. You will need to be clear on the following:

* Why you are recording audio / video (do not record if you do not need to)
* What you will do with the recordings (what will they be used for?)
* How long you will store recordings for?
* Where you will store them?
* What is the process is for deleting them when you no longer need them?
* Who will have access to the recordings? (will this be password protected?)
* How a young person, parent or carer can contact your organisation if they would like content deleted. What is the process for this? And who is responsible for deleting it?

In addition, if you did not require an ICO certificate prior to the COVID-19 crisis but the way in which you collect, utilise, store, and delete data has changed as a result of COVID-19, you will now need to check if need a certificate. You can do this by visiting <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/certification/>

**Working Agreement / Code of Conduct (young people)**

You will need to add several rules or expectations to your working agreement or code of conduct for young people to ensure young people are safe when they take part in your online activities. Some examples of these are below.

1. Do not send offensive, violent, sexual or any other form of inappropriate material to young people or staff. If this occurs, you will be removed from the session and your parents will be contacted. If the material is of a violent or sexual nature the police may need to be contacted.
2. If you are video calling, please use the function to change the background so you are not sharing your personal space – your bedroom is a private space.
3. You must join the waiting room to sign into a session before the session begins. This is so we can make sure that only people we all know take part.
4. You must not share invite links for our sessions with people who do not attend the youth club normally. If you have a friend who wants to join they must get in touch with [senior youth worker name] by phone or email [add telephone/ email address] because they will need their parents to complete a membership form before they take part in our activities.
5. Do not, under any circumstances, record or screen shot online sessions. Doing this is a serious breach of the Data Protection Act 2018 and will lead to parents/carers being notified.

**Staff and volunteer Code of Conduct**

You will need to add several points to your code of conduct for staff and volunteers. They may differ depending on the types of work you are doing during the COVID-19 crisis, below are some examples you may include:

1. There must be a minimum of 2 staff on each online session
2. There must be one lead member of staff on each session and one staff member undertaking a register/checking who has joined the session
3. Staff must arrive 15 mins early for an online session to prepare
4. Staff must de-brief with the lead worker at the end of the online session using a different online session / invite to ensure it is private.
5. Staff must ensure their physical background does not show anything private or inappropriate or that some would find offensive (e.g. posters/artwork, books etc)
6. Staff must not smoke or vape during online youth sessions
7. Staff must not drink alcohol before or during online sessions
8. Staff must wear appropriate clothing that is not revealing online
9. Staff must ensure their language and conduct during sessions are professional at all times.
10. Staff must be clear on their roles prior to the session starting
11. Staff must be aware of how to report safeguarding concerns

**Lone Working Policy (could be included in overarching Safeguarding Policy)**

You may need to update your lone working policy or refresh the lone working section in your safeguarding policy. Due to COVID-19 there may be occasions where some workers need to deliver one to one support services, such as counselling or mentoring, to young people online. It is recommended that organisations complete risk assessments for this work to ensure these sessions are safe for both the young person and the staff member(s) delivering them.

**Health and Safety Policy**

You may want to update your health and safety policy to include information on the following:

1. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) - ensure staff who are now working from home have a suitable set up for working. For more info please visit <https://www.hse.gov.uk/toolbox/workers/home.htm>
2. Health and Well-being information – some guidance for your staff that are working from home at this time as working from home can lead to people feeling isolated. You may want to include some links to websites such as Samaritans, Mind, Sane etc.
3. If your staff are key workers and are still working with people in the community, you will need to completely revisit your health and safety policy and undertake detailed risk assessments for the frontline work that will be delivered by staff.

We hope that this checklist is useful. If you have any questions or queries about your policies, please get in touch with your Membership Development Officer

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