

Supporting Voluntary Action

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Dear Voluntary and Community sector colleagues,

Coronavirus update and support for your organisation

Community Links Bromley, like many of you, has been forced to close its offices to protect our staff, our users and the public, to consider reducing face to face contact and respond to the pressures COVID 19 is creating for us all. Staff here will be working remotely, so you will still be able to contact us although all our face to face services and networking activity will be suspended until further notice.

At this unprecedented time, it's essential we all work to support each other and ensure we all remain connected for the benefit of our most vulnerable residents. We will therefore continue to send out regular communication to you all with bite sized updates as we get them from our colleagues in the public sector, funders and the wider infrastructure.

We thought it would be useful to share with you our current thinking and knowledge about what's happening around several key areas:

General updates for charities – NCVO have a really helpful webpage for charities which is being updated daily which you can find here <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/practical-support/information/coronavirus?highlight=WyJib3JvbmF2aXJ1cyJd> (Information updated 26/3/20)

Staff welfare – given many staff will now need to work from home it's important we all consider the impact this may have on some people's welfare. We found this useful resource to help you and your staff think about this <https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/voices/how-to-work-remotely-in-a-time-of-coronavirus.html> We are separately talking to a Counselling Charity to see if dedicated support can be made available to frontline staff and volunteers affected by the challenges. We will keep you updated on the progress of this initiative.

Impact on services & funding – many of you are reliant on income from the services you provide. The Council has written to grant funded organisations about their support but many of you are not in receipt of local authority funding.

What will help you in the coming weeks and months?

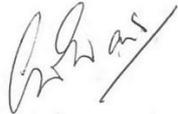
Other funders have signed up to the London Funders statement on mitigating the impact of Covid-19 re the VCS organisations they fund and commission and are working through how best to implement this in practice: <https://londonfunders.org.uk/about/covid-19>.

Community Connectivity to support the vulnerable – The Council is working with Volunteer Centre to develop volunteer support for individuals and organisations. The response has been magnificent. We are working through how to manage this at pace. In the meantime, if you wish to volunteer you may wish to register <https://www.bromley.gov.uk/VolunteerApplicationForm>

It's hard at this stage to know how long this is all going to last but we will need, at some point, to gauge the longer-term impacts and how long it might take to recover once the main impact has resided, especially as some organisations will be severely impacted by the loss of income or trading activity. We will share any government announcements about this.

What's great about Bromley is that we are all busy getting on with planning and mitigating the impacts of this difficult situation, working to our respective organisational strengths, which reflects the amazing borough this is!

With kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Evans', written in a cursive style.

Christopher Evans
Chief Executive Officer