ONLINE YOUTH WORK: GUIDELINES

In response to Covid-19 many centres are closing and moving services online. Whether staying in touch, providing resource and support and through whichever medium - the following will help you consider how.

POLICY

If your organisation does not have an online working policy, the following are good starting points when considering how to formulate one:

- What is deemed acceptable use, behaviour or language of all users?
- What is a manageable and constructive number in any one online group?
- Whilst there are exceptions to GDPR during times of emergency, how far should any policy deviate from this, and to what end?

SAFEGUARDING

Online or offline, safeguarding requires a whole organisation approach, and any planning or reviews should include the organisation's safeguarding officers. An online space still needs to be a safe space. For example:

- Are young people able to control their environment (switch off cameras and mics)?
- Are young people in a private or shared space at home?
- Can you or should you mix different age groups online?
- Can you adjust the privacy settings on the software or platform
- If using a platform of software, do the legal terms and conditions allow for the age group to use them?
- If there is any recording, live-streaming, or sharing of media, ensure all young people and their parents / guardians are informed why, & agree to this before participating.

CONSIDER:

- Are data costs inhibiting?

- Do young people have digital access / technology? Are whatsapp groups needed for some?

- Some young people may not want mass participation - can you provide for them?

BEST PRACTICE:

- Avoid handing out personal contact details, use an organisational log-in or contact.

- Do keep a register of participation, including those who arrived early or late.

- Always use a secure, encrypted connection.

- Have 2 staff online where possible and avoid one-to-one messaging - try not to work alone.

USEFUL LINKS:

- UK Safer Internet Helpline - 0344 381 4772
- Digital Candle - Charity Advice
- We The Catalysts - Online beginner guides for using digital software