There are many different ways to engage with a group of staff or volunteers in an organisation – one of which is messaging via apps such as WhatsApp or Facebook Messenger.

These are FREE to download and it is simple to share messages, links, images and videos, so is an ideal way to communicate with your volunteers

If you use these methods to communicate across your volunteer team consider the following:

- Do all your team have a smart phone and data package to support? - digital exclusion affects equity in information sharing

- Do you have clear statement in your comms policy about how and when social messaging is used?

- Consent – in accordance with your GDPR and data protection policy, you must not add any volunteer without their explicit agreement

- Include the rules of messaging as part of volunteer induction.

SETTING UP A VOLUNTEER GROUP ON A MESSAGING APP

- Clearly define the purpose of the group, the membership, administration and moderation of the group

- Clearly define as part of volunteer induction how the group is used, making sure all volunteers are aware that they are not allowed to add members, share members details, or share content with anyone outside the group

- Clearly define what information may be shared – and the consequences of posting information that breaches the values of the organisation

- Clearly advise your volunteers to protect their mobile devices, tablets and the stored data with passwords

- Clearly mandate security. WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger have an additional security function called 'two-step verification'. This means that to open WhatsApp or Messenger you will be required to enter a second password or verification code

You can view a video on two step verification for WhatsApp here

A link to the Facebook guidance on the 2 step verification can be found here

SAFEGUARDING

Be aware that WhatsApp and other social messaging apps can pose significant safeguarding issues for children and adults at risk.

- The Safeguarding Unit recommends that WhatsApp is not used in order to communicate with volunteers/members where vulnerable young people or adults are involved as social messaging cannot be externally monitored.

- If WhatsApp is to be used in these circumstances, you should use the Broadcast feature to send a message to several contacts at once, rather than to a group where individual's contact details are visible.

As good practice, it is recommended that you agree messaging etiquette with your volunteers. The **Template Agreement on Messaging Etiquette for Volunteers** may prove useful.

VISION FOR VOLUNTEERING

VODA, Volunteer Centre Newcastle, Connected Voice & NCVA are working together to promote excellence in volunteering across the North of Tyne area. This guide is one of a series promoting volunteering good practice, in line with the UK-wide Vision for Volunteering.

Vision for Volunteering tackles five key themes - awareness and appreciation of volunteering; power; equity and inclusion; collaboration; and experimentation - and explores how volunteering must adapt and evolve in each area, in order to navigate the challenges ahead, and continue to create positive change in our communities. . More than 350 people from more than 300 organisations contributed to the Vision for Volunteering. Vision for Volunteering is led by NAVCA, NCVO, Volunteering Matters, the Association of Volunteer Managers and Sport England.