

Covid-19 Welfare Check Calls:

The Groundswell Homeless Health Peer Advocacy Service (HHPA) supports people experiencing homelessness to address health issues. We work to improve people's confidence in using health services and increase their ability to access healthcare independently.

Normally we do this by supporting people one to one to attend appointments. During lockdown we have adapted this model to support people by phone. Our team will carry out regular calls to check in with people around their health and whether they need any support around Covid-19 or any other health issues they are facing.

The calls will be focused on health and wellbeing and whether people need any advocacy support to access or maintain healthcare. Although we hope that it will be good for people to hear a friendly voice, the service is not primarily designed to provide emotional support or telephone befriending. We can signpost to telephone helplines who do offer that type of support if that is what people need

Our Peer Advocates and Care Navigators have all experienced homelessness themselves. They go through a rigorous selection procedure, including DBS checks, attend a comprehensive training programme, and receive support and supervision to enable them to carry out the role safely.

How does it work?

Each person will receive an initial call from one of our Care Navigators who will collect some initial information around:

- Whether they are particularly at risk from Covid-19
- That they understand what the symptoms are
- Whether they can self-isolate if necessary and what support they might need to do that
- Whether there are any other health issues they might need support with
- Whether they would like us to phone them regularly to check in with them
- Who to contact if we have any concerns about them?

After this initial call anyone who wants regular check-ins will be assigned a volunteer, who will then carry out the welfare check calls at agreed times. During these calls they will:

- Check how the person is
- Ask if they have any symptoms and whether they are facing any issues around self-isolating
- See if there are any other health issues, they need support with

We will then log any actions that we need to carry out – signposting, referring to other services, making calls on their behalf – and ensure these happen before then next scheduled phone-call. If we have any reason to believe the person is at risk or is putting anyone else at risk, we will inform their emergency contact.

Groundswell Peer Advocates will not:

- Give out their phone number. Calls will be made by the Peer to the client, we will not be able to answer calls made to us
- Discuss the client's situation with anyone else without the client's consent (unless it's a safeguarding issue)
- Work with any issues that are not health related. We will do our best to signpost to any other services which are needed
- Work with someone whose behaviour poses a risk to the Peer Advocate.
- Meet people one to one. We have a team of Care Navigators who are supporting people to attend urgent appointments but these need to be booked via the normal HHPA booking system

How to refer: We accept referrals from anyone working in a homelessness or health service. If you want to book an Advocate to establish contact with a patient, please fill out this booking form and email it to hpa@groundswell.org.uk

If there are specific issues you believe it might be useful to discuss prior to putting in a booking, please call Groundswell on 020 7725 2851 and ask for someone working in our Homeless Health Peer Advocacy Team.

Groundswell works with anyone using homelessness services and who lives in or sleeps in the boroughs listed below. Please note, details for other homelessness support services the patient may be using can be critical in providing ongoing support.

Groundswell

Out of homelessness

Client name	
Client Phone Number(s)	
Which borough do they usually live in or access services in? Please Circle	Available Boroughs: Islington; Camden; Hackney; Westminster; Tower Hamlets; Lambeth; Greenwich; H&F; K&C;
Name and contact details of person making the referral	
Has the client agreed to receive a welfare call?	YES NO
Is it ok for the initial call to be made directly to the client or should it come through one of your team?	
Please state reason(s) why a welfare call is wanted by the client or thought beneficial by referring individual?	
Current Accommodation/Address	
Usual Hostel/Address if different	

Additional Support Information

Any additional support needs/requirements (i.e. mobility issues, potential risks, language/literacy, needs a female advocate etc.)	
Does the client have any hobbies or specific interests?	
Any other relevant information which would be useful for an advocate to know	

