

## Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Learning from practice

**Your role and organisation:** Alison Bunce, Founder, Compassionate Inverclyde

### How have you been able to keep a focus on what matters to people during COVID?



Compassionate Inverclyde is a community-based movement based on ordinary people helping ordinary people. We had two key projects before the virus started. Both involved tackling isolation and we were very comfortable with how we were working. With COVID, it wasn't possible to continue either project as normal, because they involved volunteers on hospital wards. I had to think on my feet about how we could still engage with the community. Kindness is key to what we do and keeping that as the focus – how do we do kindness safely – we've been able to find other ways to keep going.

### What have you had to do differently and what made this possible?

First of all my role changed. I became very operational. The first two weeks it was just me and then a small group of regular volunteers started coming into our storeroom in the basement of the hospital. Instead of us going to the wards with back home boxes for people going home, ward staff came down to us to get various items for patients. We've had 15 teachers join as volunteers and they now do the collections for us.

Bellville Community Gardens were doing isolation boxes for people unable to get out and about. As the need was increasing, it seemed like an obvious next step for us to adapt our Back Home Boxes to become isolation boxes with enough groceries to last a few days.

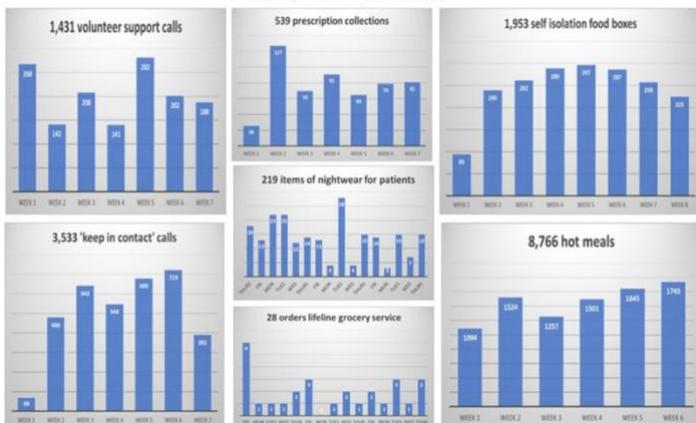
Our volunteers have linked with Your Voice, phoning people isolated at home on a daily basis. And we've been collecting and delivering prescriptions for people too.

### What have you noticed that has been better?

It's as important now as it ever was that people feel the community cares about them. Feedback tells us that is happening. We get messages sent back telling us how useful people find the groceries. But as well as the food side of it, the personal touches in the boxes strike a chord. I had a message yesterday to thank us, specifically mentioning the card and message drawn by a local primary school child.

Third sector organisations have formed Inverclyde Community Action Response Group.

### Inverclyde CARG metrics



There is no hierarchy, no competition. We have worked together to make sure we make the most of our joint resources to respond to the community. These metrics captures our collective efforts up to 9<sup>th</sup> May.

Having nursing staff coming down here to the store has been a positive. The nurses are able to respond to immediate needs of

patients through getting pyjamas, toiletries, snacks or whatever. We enjoy the chat. There is a reciprocity in that and shared kindness.

### How did this make you feel?

I am a planner and it was frustrating for me to lose control to this virus. I didn't realise how much freedom I had! I am relieved though to be able to continue as we have.

I am scunnered with zoom and looking forward very much to being able to get together with volunteers in a room again.

I feel grateful to the volunteers who have been able to keep going and the ones who have formed this team with me in the hospital.

### What have you learned through this?



The Action Group has reinforced to me how useful it can be to have several heads working out solutions and sparking off ideas together. I hope that group continues and we can do some joint future planning. My own dream has been to have a Compassionate Inverclyde scheme which gives awards for kindness. Louise Long, who is the HSCP Director here, wants to extend that even further and make it Inverclyde Cares, bringing in wider services and supports.

### Anything else you want to tell us?

A key positive in all of this is the new relationships we have developed. We want to continue those opportunities as we move out of this situation.