



Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Phase 2 understanding from experience

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What has continued to help keep a focus on what matters for people during the pandemic?

Our programme Get Togethers supports organisations to provide access to good food, green space, and eating well and all of this is still important for people. A lot of people are applying for small grants to provide ingredients for a recipe and then support people to cook along online. This is a great way to see people, access good food and learn new cooking skills.

On the other hand for people with lower incomes this time is really difficult with the numbers facing food poverty increasing, with particular concerns about the number of children affected. As well as affordability of good food, accessibility is still a concern for many. A lot of people are working hard to find creative ways to support their communities by providing free food.

Are there changes that seem to be lasting longer term and are there things that have slid back to old ways of doing things?

A lot of changes have continued regarding food and eating since the pandemic started, a lot of it is connected to wanting to be healthy and also to spending time and energy on eating well. Sales of organic food have increased and the number of people growing their own food has increased. It seems that more people are interested in cooking.

Like most people we are still working from home and have not been able to have any face to face meetings for a long time now. Our offices are still closed. With most things now online, back to back video meetings are the new normal.

What difference has this made to people?

There has been a discussion around digital inclusion for service users. This doesn't affect me as such but more so the organisations we work with and can be seen as a barrier for some. I'm not sure that it's always understood how much time and resource is required to adapting all services to be online.

How did this make you feel?

I know that being online and using different platforms can have advantages to many people, ensuring that people can stay connected, and I feel that is important. On the

other hand, I find it challenging and exhausting being online all the time. Part of my job is engagement so it's looking at ways to deal with these barriers.

Reflecting on your experiences what have you learned?

It's so important to take regular breaks. Remembering to get outside for a walk or run helps to keep me sane along with staying connected to friends and family. I also need to remind myself that it's ok to have a bad day. Eating online sometimes is not an enjoyable experience for me!

What difference has it made to you to tell your story as part of this project?

It has helped me have some perspective and to realise that there is value in what I am trying to do.

Anything else you want to tell us?

Thanks for the opportunity to tell me my story. It was great to hear all the great work that other people are doing in response to the pandemic.