



Personal Outcomes Stories during COVID: Phase 2 understanding from experience

Phase 2 Story Template

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

We devised our emergency COVID19 response specifically targeting those living with severe or moderate frailty. This service was a huge success. Therefore, we have been able to extend for an additional 12 months. The service we will be delivering over the coming months is however, an enhanced service in comparison with the emergency response. This is a new way of working, proactively contacting people to offer them support. The calls we are making now offer a really person centred approach, are based on paying attention to what people have told us so far. We ask about getting out and about, ability to travel, shopping and prescriptions, heating and internet, ability to attend online meetings, interests and hobbies. We also ask how they feel about attending services, whether they would like an assessment to look at benefits, housing and local clubs and whether there is anything else they want to ask about. The conversation is aligned to 'Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs' to ensure all areas of need are being covered and the questions focus on them as an individual.

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

The relationships that have strengthened with both clients and Red Cross, and also the Red Cross with GP Practices will help us massively longer term.

What difference has this made to people?

Red Cross Team Member Quote

"I found that all the people who I spoke with appreciated the call from Red Cross. There was a combination of people who answered the questions only and thanking for the concern and phone call, to others who wanted to have a chat. I found that the majority of people had support in place from their family and friends who were able to help because they too were at home during the lockdown. The people who were receiving the shielding food parcels were pleasantly surprised with the contents. Some people who were entitled to the parcels chose not to take them as they were either supported by their families, or thought others were more in need of them. I have really enjoyed having chats, we had some laughs and I was given tips on various things. I found that they were grateful of a conversation with another person, out with their family circle or those isolated/lonely. Gardens were a positive topic, as well as the weather. The feedback I got was that their gardens was a saving grace, a space whereby they could sit and enjoy the warm weather (and much needed vitamin D!). On many occasions I said that there should be a garden competition when the lockdown was over, which got a few laughs. On the whole the majority of people were fed up of the restrictions, but were looking after themselves with regards to food/nutrition, and the people who were supported really appreciated their family and friends in doing so."

Quotes from Service Users

"Dear Friends, as far as I am concerned, the support is perfect, you have helped me such a lot. I thank you all from the bottom of my heart, also for the lovely card enclosed with my food. God bless you all"

"I have been really satisfied and the great work the Red Cross and helper do. If it was not for your self's, I would just be one number slipped by. The helper was great and talked to me for a long time."

"If yourselves did not do what you are helping with, my distress would have gone high and I would gone downhill with my health. You had no trouble doing things for me, it is a long hard time for me. If there was not people like the Red Cross and helpers and other lifelines, a lot more people would not be here. All I can say is I cannot say thank you enough for all your support."

British Red Cross Volunteer Quotes

"When I was asked, as a volunteer, to assist with the work of the BRC by contacting those severe/moderate patients advised to Stay at Home, I was glad of the opportunity to do something useful.

"This was because I, myself, am in the "vulnerable" group of people whose daily life had also become restricted."

Response to my somewhat "out of the blue" call was generally welcomed once the name RED CROSS was mentioned. Calls lasted anything from "Yes, we're fine ... good bye" to a long chat covering anything from trouble with neighbours to problems with arthritic knees, nightly trips to the bathroom, over-eating and haircuts!!

On a practical level, as well as listening, I was able to assist a few people to get help with some problems.

One of these was a terminally ill man who had lost his hearing aids and was unable to attend the clinic for assessment. He didn't want to bother the doctor or the ENT dept. so I offered to call them on his behalf. The outcome was that they were able to furnish him with a new set based on his previous script and posted them out to him. When I called him back to tell him this, the relief and gratitude in his voice was really touching. The team leader at RC followed this up the next week to check all was well.

In another call, the subject of a grandfather's concerns over his daughter's situation with her 3 children, one of whom was autistic, living in a top flat in the town, were highlighted. He was so worried because she clearly depended on his help (being a single parent) but that had to be stopped. My background is in assisting families such as this and I was able to contact a support organisation in Edinburgh and give him the direct number of someone I had worked with and who I knew would be able to assist them.

Having made over 300 calls to a varied client group, the overwhelming response to my enquiries was that of very grateful appreciation that someone had taken the time and trouble to be in touch.

How did this make you feel?

Leading on this piece of work has hands down been the most rewarding thing I have ever done in my career working in the NHS. This has given me masses of job satisfaction, knowing that a service which I designed and implemented has reached so many people and has helped them in some way is just incredible. I am really proud of all involved and this is something I will never forget.

Reflecting on your experiences what have you learned?

I have learnt that during these difficult times, we have to use the positives and jump at the opportunities it gives us. We have been able to devise a new service and implement a new way of working which has made such a difference to people, contacting people in ways in which we would never normally be able to thanks to a relaxation in Information Governance legislation.

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

I feel being able to share this story has given me a good chance to reflect and to share this with others in the hope this may influence ways in which other areas work is great. I am privileged that the personal outcomes network feel my work is worthy of sharing so thank you for giving me this opportunity.