



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?

The need to sustain contact with service users under the protracted prevalence of the virus and associated restrictions on everyday lives has been reinforced via regular updates from North Lanarkshire Council, national and local organisations.

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

Biggest single change since the pandemic with video, telephone and email contact being established as the default methods of contact has remained at the same high level and is unlikely to go back to the previous ways of working. Acknowledging how difficult it is for us all to manage our lives remains an essential element in our contacts with service users and colleagues. We need to remain aware of the need to consider each person's capacity and preference for communication by remaining person centred and not taking a one size fits all approach.

What difference has this made to people?

People have responded positively to the shared experience approach and this helps diffuse some of the anxiety that we have all had to bear for the last 7 months.

How did this make you feel?

The expression I've heard many times during this pandemic is that it brings out the worst and the best in people and I feel heartened that it is the latter response which remains prominent. However, it will be in the weeks and months ahead post pandemic when this approach will be equally important.

Reflecting on your experiences what have you learned?

Given the incredibly large scale of what had to happen to continue operating as a responsive service I've been pleasantly surprised how well NLC have coped with the technological/logistic challenges of switching from office to home based working.

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

It has been interesting for me to reflect on the pandemic impact from this perspective, from an operational point of view.

Anything else you want to tell us?

On a personal level whilst the technology for agile working has worked well, I miss being part of a team with a physical location. Direct person to person contact with service users and colleagues should continue to be the default approach for NLC and all local authority front line social work services if and when this becomes feasible in the future.