



## 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?**

I know my staff better now than before, and they know each other more too. Those mutual support traits have been brought to the surface. Some have faced challenges at home during this time and there is a tiredness that wasn't there before. I'm trying to look out for my support for learning staff. Many of them have other jobs to make ends meet. We depend on them to keep things going but need to take care not to wear them out.

The children adapt to the limitations and are guided by the adults on that front. They limit their expectations. At the same time, they are looking for something different from the school and they want school to replace some of the lost opportunities for socialising.

I think our relationship with families has shifted during the pandemic. We receive fewer complaints than before. The parent council has been amazing. I am in a Whatsapp group with them. They do what they can to raise funds. This included a pyjama day in school, with a £1 suggested donation. One parent donated her Bingo winnings. We used the funds to make gift bags for the children.

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

We worked very closely with voluntary sector organisations during the first stage of the pandemic. With the funding situation being uncertain for many, that has changed a bit, but we want to keep those links going where we can.

It's a fine balance between focusing on the health and wellbeing of children at this time and continuing attainment.

#### **What difference has this made to people?**

I think the children feel they have more of a voice than before. We have tried to listen to them too. They decided they wanted something to replace Halloween. So we are having fluffy socks, pyjamas, hot chocolate for everyone instead. It's like that Hygge they have in Scandinavia, except we are calling it a coorie-in week.

Some of our families benefited from having more time together during lockdown. We have a lot of parents in low-paid jobs who are working long hours. When they were furloughed, they were able to spend more time with their children, and that was positive for many kids, I would say they were more nurtured.

**How did this make you feel?**

I worry about how people are going to keep managing through Winter. At the same time I'm hopeful because of the more positive bits that have come out of this crisis.

**Reflecting on your experiences what have you learned?**

It is critical to listen to everyone. You are constantly adapting to the latest circumstances of the pandemic and it can be easy to focus on one group without thinking through the consequences for others. There is still that shared sense of purpose though, a feeling that we have the same goal.

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

This project is a bit like Samuel Pepys diary. It's important to capture these stories at the time especially as diaries are a thing of the past.

I hope the staff know I have got their backs, and maybe this can help confirm that message.

**Anything else you want to tell us?**

On a personal level, I am finding that some of the people I know outside of school are really struggling with the ongoing situation. Inside and outside school it can feel a bit like climbing a Munro at times. You are trying to see what is coming round the next bend. Self-care is a challenge at times but I am getting a wood burning stove at home and that feels like good self-care for this Winter.