BUILDING CONNECTIONS FUND:

Collaborative Learning Sessions Resources Pack

As part of it's developmental evaluation of the BCF Fund, NPC facilitated monthly collaborative learning sessions, voluntary monthly webinars open to all grant-holders. They typically consisted of a mix of peer-to-peer support, and structured learning. Grant-holders shared challenges and solutions they had encountered over the previous month with each other, and NPC suggested some structured ways to approach these challenges, primarily through the purposeful use of data. Usually, the key challenge heard from each session informed the topic of the next session allowing the discussion to be driven by the needs of grant holders. Session slides, summaries and tools are available for download here. These documents were shared on an ongoing basis with grant-holders (both attendees and those who couldn't make it) to help inform their practice.

Contents:

BCF: WRITEUP OF FIRST COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

Wednesday 29th April 2020 marked the first of a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for BCF grant-holders, hosted by NPC. We were delighted to have between 40 and 45 attendees for most of the session. The purpose of the first session was to address issues that grant-holder were experiencing around moving services to digital and digital inclusion. These issues were highlighted as top priorities by grant-holders in a recent survey conducted by NPC. The session covered:

- The survey results
- A new live guidance document for grant-holders
- Tips for moving services to digital, from Ab Brightman, service design expert
- Updates from the Campaign to End Loneliness, from Robin Hewings, Director of Campaigns, Policy and Research
- And time for grant-holders to discuss challenges and ask questions relating to digital delivery and digital inclusion.

Grant-holders were asked via a poll what would be the most useful topic for the second session and the majority felt that impact and measurement should be the focus. Grant holders were also polled on how useful they found the session and 90 chose very useful and 5% each chose neutral and not useful.

Summary of key challenges

- Getting feedback from communities, and knowing how to understand user needs without face-to-face conversations.
- How to do remote team working well/effectively, how to balance work and home life, how to prevent staff burnout.
- Finding out what other organisations are doing - avoiding duplication and identifying gaps.
- Service users/clients may not be able to/want to use technology – learning how to support/engage them.
- Making sure services are accessible, e.g. for non-English speakers.
- Safeguarding issues - how to protect clients/service users.
- Data sharing, contact issues – not being able to obtain the details of service users who are lonely or isolated, so they cannot be checked on.
- Difficulty transferring some services to be digital/remote rather than in-person, e.g. exercise sessions.
- The speed with which organisations have had to adapt to changes has been a challenge in itself.

What service users are saying

- Many service users are saying the crisis hasn't dramatically affected them, as they are usually socially isolated – some have actually seen an increase in social contact.
- Service users with learning disabilities and mental health problems have found lockdown more challenging.

- Victims of domestic violence are usually in hiding and less likely to join sessions, but there have been some cases of increased attendance of online activities (if they can remain anonymous).
- Some organisations found that there was a decrease in the number of service users attending online activities compared to face-to-face activities.

How organisations are adapting

- **Service delivery changes**
  - Increasing focus on transferring services online or to telephone – e.g. phone befriending services, phone buddying, weekly Zoom group calls, online quizzes.
  - Some organisations also exploring non-digital options, e.g. writing letters, posting activity packs, book and board game exchanges.
  - Several organisations also pivoting to help vulnerable people in the community with shopping, medicines etc.
  - Lots of organisations are experimenting with different online platforms – e.g. Zoom, Facebook groups, Whatsapp groups, mailouts.
- Protecting service users' **privacy** online and **safeguarding** users in a variety of ways, including:
  - Putting emojis over faces during Zoom sessions.
  - Using closed Facebook groups, in some cases monitoring all posts through admin accounts before they are shared.
  - Reading confidentiality statements at the start of online meetings/emailing group agreements in advance.
  - Making sure users are aware of privacy settings and features e.g. display names, how to turn video on and off.
  - Using safety features on platforms, e.g. passwords and waiting rooms on Zoom, turning off screen-sharing.

Notes from Ab Brightman

- Start with finding out your **users' needs and behaviours**. You may think you know these really well, but service users' needs will have changed over the last two months. Try to find solutions that fit with your users' existing behaviours.
- **Reuse** – build on what you already have and who is already solving the problem, to avoid duplication. There are lots of free tools and initiatives other charities are already using.
- Test small and **iterate and improve** based on what you learn.
- Follow an established **digital design process**. There are lots of free resources for this available online. A good starting point is The Catalyst's free digital service redesign course for new starters.
- More information from The Catalyst can be found on their website.
- You can email Ab at ab@thecatalyst.org.uk.

Notes from Robin Hewings

- Working to repurpose existing work, e.g. report on psychology of loneliness, to make sure it is useful and relevant in the current context.

- Looking at new ways that people can connect with each other, and how to give them motivation and confidence.
- Running a series of webinars to look at learning about what we can best do in the crisis. The first session will look at what people in the loneliness community would say to those who are newly worried about loneliness.
- Some types of digital inclusion are happening organically through friends and family, but they are looking to see how this process can be sped up and broadened.
- You can follow Robin on Twitter at @RobinHewings

Resources from grant-holders

- Jennie Cooke from Grapevine in Coventry has developed two Zoom training sessions – you can email her for more information at jcooke@grapevinecovandwarks.org.
- Befriending Networks have a lot of downloadable resources – you can find tips, videos and training resources on their website.

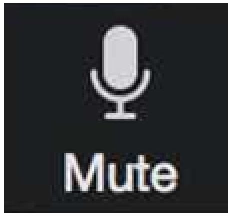
BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

Session #2

WELCOME!
WE WILL START SOON.

WHAT IS ‘GOOD ENOUGH’ DATA AND EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT DECISION MAKING AT PACE?

BEFORE WE BEGIN...



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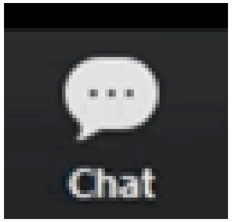

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AIMS FOR TODAY’S LEARNING SESSION

- Reflection: what is ‘good enough’ data and evidence to support decision making?
- Framework for thinking about collecting and using data
- Discussion and sharing insights, ideas and tips

SCHEDULE OF TODAY'S LEARNING SESSION

- 5 minutes for intros in small groups
- 15 minute presentation on framework to think about collecting and using data and evidence
- 15 minute breakout group discussion to share with and learn from others
- 10 minutes to feedback from group discussion
- 5 minutes close and next steps

UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Learning cohort - Let us know if you want to join!**
  Email me at thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

- **Emerging Tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**

- **Quick poll:** who has used the document and how have you found it?

CHALLENGES RAISED IN THE LAST SESSION

These are some of the key challenges related to data and evidence and decision making that were raised last month:

- Getting feedback from communities, and knowing how to understand user needs without face-to-face conversations.
- Finding out what other organisations are doing - avoiding duplication and identifying gaps.
- Service users/clients may not be able to/want to use technology – learning how to support/engage them.
- Making sure services are accessible, e.g. for non-English speakers.

GROUPS: WHAT IS ‘GOOD ENOUGH’?

- In smaller breakout groups quick intro/ice-breaker

- 5 minutes

In each breakout group:
- Please introduce yourself and your organisation.
- Please share your thoughts on:
    - What is ‘good enough’ data and evidence to support decision making at pace?’
    - What does this look like within your organisation at the moment?

3 STEPS TO THINKING ABOUT COLLECTING AND USING DATA/EVIDENCE

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions

2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data

3. Work out how the data can be best used

STEP 1. WORK OUT WHAT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO MAKE DECISIONS

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out how the data can be best used

A) Consider 5 types of data: How can they help you?

B) Identify key questions: What questions do you need answered?

C) Prioritise questions: Which of these are urgent now? Which of these aren't urgent right now but will become important in the medium- longer term?

A) CONSIDER 5 TYPES OF DATA

Types of data
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.
4) Outcomes: Short-term changes or benefits that users experience as a result of your activities.
5) Impact: The long-term change that you want users to achieve.

B) IDENTIFY QUESTIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who would we normally reach that we aren't reaching now? • Who are we reaching now that we normally don't? • What issues do people need help with? • How are these issues different to normal?
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• How are people engaging with services and to what extent? • How are new methods of reaching people changing how they engage?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement? • Do they like them? • Do they find them useful? • Which aspects work well? • Which don't work well? How could these be improved?
4) Outcomes: Short-term changes or benefits that users experience as a result of your activities.	• What do we know/think about what short-term changes this will cause? (Intended/unintended).
5) Impact: The long-term change that you want users to achieve.	• What difference do we think our outcomes will make to our long-term impact?

C) PRIORITISE QUESTIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who would we normally reach that we aren't reaching now? • Who are we reaching now that we normally don't? • What issues do people need help with? • How are these issues different to normal?
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• How are people engaging with services and to what extent? • How are new methods of reaching people changing how they engage?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement? • Do they like them? • Do they find them useful? • Which aspects work well? • Which don't work well? How could these be improved?
4) Outcomes: Short-term changes or benefits that users experience as a result of your activities.	• What do we know/think about what short-term changes this will cause? (Intended/unintended).
5) Impact: The long-term change that you want users to achieve.	• What difference do we think our outcomes will make to our long-term impact?

STEP 2. WORK OUT IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO COLLECT THAT DATA.

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out how the data can be best used

A) **Consider what's already collected:** Do we already have the data? And/or is it available anywhere else?

B) **Consider ease and method:** Is it possible to collect? How will you collect it?

C) **Consider safety and ethics:** Is it possible to collect the data? Is it safe? Is it ethical?

A) CONSIDER WHAT'S ALREADY COLLECTED; EXAMPLE

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What is already collected?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• What are the key issues that people need help with? • Who are we not reaching?	• Key issues noted individually • Registers of users from before the crisis
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement?	• Casually asking people what they thought of the session, and to let you know if they have suggestions.

B) CONSIDER EASE …

Is it possible to collect?

- Do we have staff/volunteer capacity to gather, store and analyse that data?
- Do people have the knowledge, skills and technology required to provide data via phone or online if necessary?

How will you collect it? (method)

B) …AND METHOD; EXAMPLE

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What could be collected
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• What are the key issues that people need help with? • Who are we not reaching?	• **FAQs:** Could pull topics from call log and tally up common issues, then ask staff to record this more consistently in the future. • **Better demographic details captured at registration:** Could try to do this by sharing a simplified online form that uses similar format to previous registration form to facilitate comparison and look for gaps.
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement?	• **Feedback at the end of calls:** At the end of calls, we could ask people if they'd be happy to be contacted again in a month to ask them a couple of anonymous questions about their experience.

C) CONSIDER SAFETY AND ETHICS

Is it safe and ethical?

- Can we follow government guidelines on social distancing while collecting the data?
- Is it an appropriate question to be asking someone at the moment?
- Can we collect data in an accessible and inclusive way so that everyone can participate if they want to?
- Would we be able to ensure safeguarding processes are adhered to?
- Will people be able to provide informed consent?

If the answer to any of these is **no**, perhaps reconsider if this is necessary

The ICO encourages us to keep sharing data, but...

- **Keep it clear** - be clear, open and honest with people about what you are doing with their personal information.
- **Keep it lawful** - do you have the person's consent? Or would they expect you to collect/use/store their information in that way?
- **Keep it secure** - share files securely online, use password protection
- **Keep it to a minimum** - only collect, use and keep what you actually need!

From https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-community-groups-and-covid-19/

STEP 3. WORK OUT HOW THE DATA CAN BE BEST USED

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out how the data can be best used

A) **Integrate data into delivery decisions:** How will the data and it's insights be integrated into delivery?

B) **How can we use this data to continually learn and improve?**

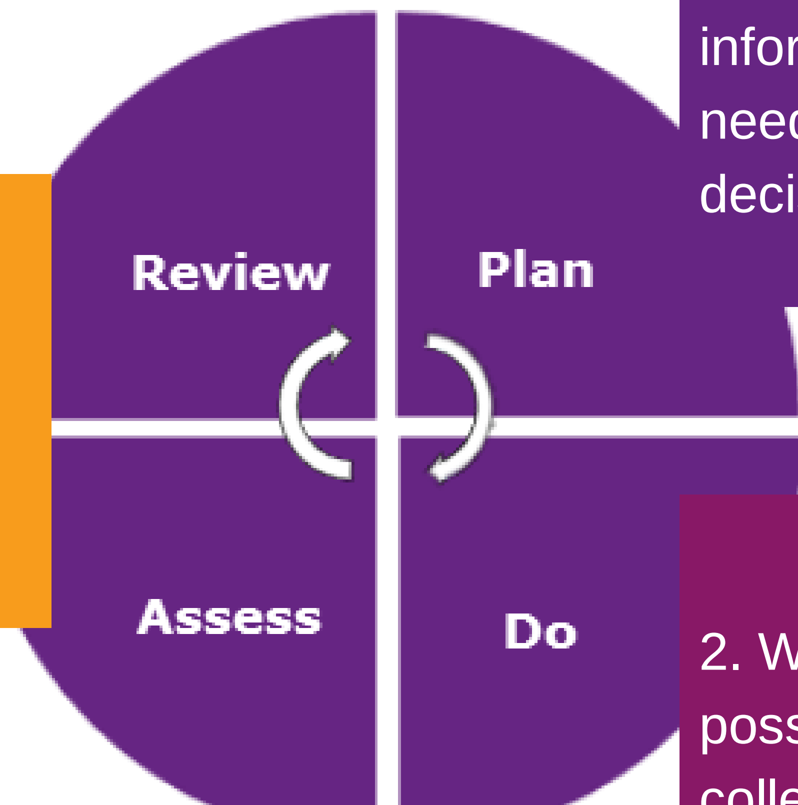
A) INTEGRATE DATA INTO DELIVERY DECISIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What could be collected	Delivery decisions
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• What are the key issues that people need help with? • Who are we not reaching?	• FAQs • Better demographic details captured at registration	• Send staff a weekly email briefing with top issues from the previous week and a reminder of the key advice we're giving. • Check for blind spots. Compare with other local organisations. Reach out to underserved users.
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement?	• Feedback at the end of calls	• Review Feedback periodically, tally up key themes, and check for possible improvements.

B) WORK OUT HOW WE CAN USE THIS DATA TO CONTINUALLY LEARN AND IMPROVE

B) WORK OUT HOW WE CAN USE THIS DATA TO CONTINUALLY LEARN AND IMPROVE

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions



2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data

3. Work out how the data can be best used

3 STEPS TO THINKING ABOUT COLLECTING AND USING DATA/EVIDENCE

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions

2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data

3. Work out how the data can be best used

LET'S HEAR FROM EACH OTHER

- Smaller breakout groups

- 10-15mins

Discuss how data collection and use is working within your organisation:

- Do these three steps resonate? Are they helpful?
- What information do you need to make decisions? (Step 1)
- Is it possible to collect the data you need? (Step 2)

- (If time…) How are you using the data you collect? (Step 3)

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out how the data can be best used

FEEDBACK IN PLENARY

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What is already collected?	What could be collected?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.			
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?			
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.			
4) Outcomes: Short-term changes or benefits that users experience as a result of your activities.			

QUICK POLLS

Quick poll: What type of data are you collecting now?

Quick poll: What type of data are you thinking about start collecting more of soon?

What would you like to cover in the next session?

FINAL REMINDERS

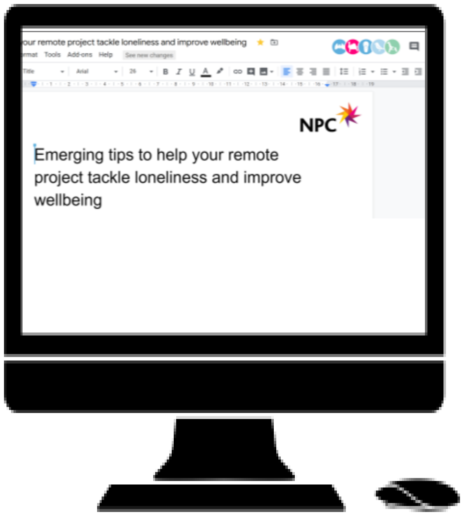
Resources available:

- Learning cohort

- Emerging tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness
  - New updates on M&E coming

- Upcoming slides
  - And then write up of this session

- Last Collaborative Learning Session's write-up
- Last month's survey results



THANK YOU

Thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

BCF: WRITEUP OF SECOND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

We originally tried to carry on with our data collection as before, but things had changed so much that this wasn't appropriate anymore because everything had shifted so far.

Session participant

NPC held its second in a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for the Building Connections Fund on Wednesday 27th May 2020. A total of 20 grant-holders joined the webinar over the course of the session, though not all were able to join for the full duration. The session covered issues around monitoring and evaluation (M&E), in particular looking at how grant-holders could continue to collect data during the crisis to learn from and improve their services during this period. This topic was chosen by grant-holders at the end of the first Collaborative Learning Session in April. The May session covered:

- Updates from NPC about the learning cohort and live guidance document.
- Breakout group discussions on what 'good enough' data looks like during this period.
- Presentation: NPC shared three steps for adapting measurement and evaluation to inform decision-making, followed by a group discussion.
- Feedback from each group and polls to determine what data grant-holders are currently, or will soon be, collecting.

Accompanying slides can be viewed here.

What is 'good enough' data?

I've realised that we're already informally collecting information, we're just not necessarily recognising that that's what we're doing.

Session participant

Some grant-holders noted that their approach to M&E during this period was understandably very reactive:

- Some felt they had limited capacity or headspace to focus on complex evaluations or impact measurement processes.
- Many commented that M&E didn't feel like a priority at the moment and that it was hard to fit it in whilst trying to support beneficiaries remotely.
- This is made even harder in the case of some organisations who are seeing an increase in the number of beneficiaries who are in need of crisis support. One attendee emphasised that it is very difficult to build up a relationship or to ask what might be perceived as 'invasive' questions on these types of calls.
- Trying to collect data from service users who are at a crisis point is in itself very difficult, as this work tends to be shorter-term and more reactive, and any data collection needs to be handled extremely sensitively.
- Many commented that it has been difficult collecting data over the phone as it can feel insensitive or be a trigger for strong emotions. One grant-holder said that doing interviews with service users was causing stress to a group who was already stressed and frightened. Staff therefore didn't want to push for collecting data in this way and by doing so exacerbate stress levels. Another emphasised that their users typically needed in-person staff support to answer questionnaires, which has made data collection difficult.

- There was a worry that data collected in this time may not be representative as those who are digitally excluded may not be able to participate. Data collected may also be skewed in light of the effect of the current situation on users' general wellbeing and personal situations.

Many are therefore focusing on 'good enough' data that is more anecdotal, and can be more easily collected – for example, building in questions at the end of existing email or phone conversations where possible.

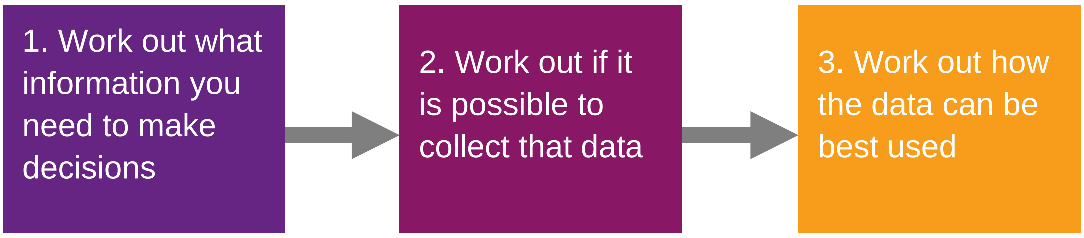
What is 'good enough' data?

'Good enough' data – With data collection, there is usually a trade-off between how rigorous it is and how difficult it is to collect. While good quality research data is the gold standard when making decisions, it is important to consider what data is 'good enough' to inform your decisions, given your constraints. This will require a judgement. For more on proportionate data collection look here.

E.g. staff and service users may not have the time or headspace to do a formal survey using validated measures at the end of a session, it may feel more appropriate at this stage to ask a few short questions to gauge how service users are doing.

Please make sure all data is collected and stored according to GDPR. For more information on data protection and your responsibilities look here.

NPC's 3 steps to adapting M&E



NPC shared three steps to adapting M&E processes before asking grant-holders to discuss these in small groups.

We've been capturing data from calls but only thinking about it in terms of the individual. You've given me food for thought as to whether we could be looking for themes and think of it as analytical data we can use in other ways.

Session participant

General feedback and thoughts from grant-holders were as follows:

- The three steps resonated with grant-holders as a useful way of thinking about M&E in the current climate. Some grant-holders commented that it showed that they had already been informally collecting lots of data without realising that they were doing this.
- Many grant-holders are finding that their previous M&E processes are now not fit-for-purpose and are having to adapt or put in place new processes.
- Those collecting outcomes data have particularly struggled. NPC suggested focusing on the collection of easier to collect user and feedback data (See NPC's 5 Types of data blog). Qualitative data might be easier to collect going forwards (in relation to outcomes data).
- The idea of collecting user data to better understand reach and identify who is being missed resonated with many of the grant-holders on the call.

- There was a suggestion that organisations could be doing more to look at the negative impacts on service users during this time, for example looking at what is missing from service delivery now and how this affects users.
- Some organisations were also trying to think about longer-term positives of the current situation, for example users becoming more digitally skilled and online sessions providing increased accessibility to some users.

Safe and Ethical data collection

As part of step 2, we advised grant-holders to consider whether it is safe and ethical to collect data.

We encouraged grant-holders to consider whether questions would be appropriate and sensitive in the current situation, and whether the process would be accessible and inclusive.

We also urged them to be mindful of considerations around social distancing, safeguarding and consent.

Our advice is that it is vital to be **clear, open and honest** with users about what you will do with their information, why you need it and who it will be shared with, and to ensure any data is kept in a safe location. Further guidance on research ethics and data protection can be found here.

NPC's 3 steps: examples of how grant-holders were using 'Good enough' data

NPC asked grant-holders to discuss how they had adapted their data collection during this period. There had been a range of approaches, with a mix between grant-holders gathering 'anecdotal' evidence and research data.

What is the difference between 'anecdotal' insights and research data?

Anecdotal insights – Insights collected in a casual or informal way. Not collected across all service users and typically not recorded systematically. Note, these are still insights and can be valuable, they just aren't necessarily representative of everyone's experiences.

E.g. one-off comments given by users at the end of calls or emails.

Research data – Data collected in a systematic way, using tools that have been designed to help answer a specific question and can be assessed for quality by common standards (research data can vary in quality relating to the reliability and validity of data). The same tools are used to gather and record insights from a number of service users, allowing for comparison and/or explanation.

E.g. short surveys or topic guides for a focus group.

Please make sure all data is collected and stored according to GDPR. For more information on data protection and your responsibilities look here.

The approaches described by grant-holders are summarised below:

- Some organisations had focused on collecting data on the work of other organisations in the community to identify gaps in service provision.
- As grant-holders considered challenges around access to services and digital exclusion, several focused on analysing user data to identify groups of users who were now engaging but may not have previously needed support.

- A number of organisations were focused on gathering engagement and feedback data from users to adapt their delivery to suit user needs.
- Some found that data collection methods they had used prior to the lockdown, such as in-depth questionnaires, were no longer working and had shifted to more informal, ‘anecdotal’ insight gathering, for example, using mini-question sets.
- Grant-holders discussed concerns around gauging how much attention to give to developing new measurement tools given uncertainty around how long changes in delivery might last.

12 grant-holders were polled on what types of data they are currently collecting, and what they plan to start collecting soon. The following table reports how many of this group of grant-holders are collecting or plan to collect different types of data. For confidentiality reasons, numbers smaller than five are reported as ‘5 or under’.

Type of data	What types of data are you collecting now?	What types of data do you think you will start collecting soon?
User data	8	0
Engagement data	9	0
Feedback data	7	5 or under
Outcomes data	5 or under	5 or under
Impact data	0	7
None of these	5 or under	0
I don’t know	0	5 or under

The results of this poll are interesting; while the sample size was very small, it is notable that more grant holders are currently collecting engagement data than user data, and grant-holders are interested in starting to collect impact data (despite this not having been suggested).

BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

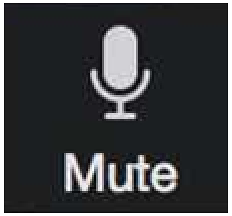
Session #3

REVIEWING YOUR DATA

WELCOME!
WE WILL START SOON.

YOU'LL NEED A PIECE OF A4 (OR BIGGER) PAPER FOR THIS SESSION AND IDEALLY 2 DIFFERENT COLOURED PENS.

BEFORE WE BEGIN...



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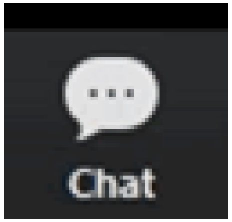


Please introduce yourself on the chat.
Use Chat for questions
Clarifying questions will be answered as we go
Other questions will be answered at the end or afterwards via email

- **We are recording this session**
- **We will write up notes and share them within the BCF and eventually on our public NPC Labs page**
- **No names and organisations will be used**

QUICK INTRODUCTION

In the chat box, please share your:

→ Name

→ Organisation

→ One word or phrase to describe how you feel about the decisions you/your organisation needs to make

ABOUT TODAY’S SESSION

5 minutes introduction

5 minute presentation

30 minute activity in groups to share with and learn from others

10 minutes to feedback from group discussion

UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Want to shout & share about some great work you are doing?**

  Let us know if you want to write a blog, present here…

- **Emerging Tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**
  - New section on Measurement and Evaluation
  - New section on safeguarding
  - Remember to contribute!

- **NPC Labs** (for sharing with people outside of the BCF)

AIM OF THE DAY

Last month, organisations raised some challenges about their data collection:

- Some were collecting anecdotal insights without really thinking about how they could be collected and used more systematically
- Others were collecting data but didn't necessarily know how they could better use it to make decisions
- Some had important decisions to make but weren't sure what the best data was to inform those decisions.

REVIEWING YOUR DATA

Last month, organisations raised some challenges about their data collection:

- Some were collecting anecdotal insights without really thinking about how they could be collected and used more systematically
- Others were collecting data but didn't necessarily know how they could better use it to make decisions
- Some had important decisions to make, but weren't sure what the best data was to inform those decisions.

Today's Aim: Help you think more systematically about your data

4 KEY QUESTIONS

1. What decisions do I need to make now/soon/in the future?
2. What information do we need to make those decisions?
3. **Have I already got that info? Is it possible to collect that data?**
4. **What am I going to do with the data once I've got it?**

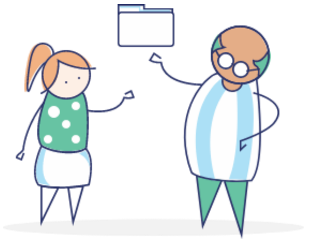
5 TYPES OF DATA

5 types of data	Example methods for the arts club data collection
1) "User": The characteristics of the service users you aim to reach	- Sign-up form
2) "Engagement": The extent to which people should use the service. How often and for how long?	- Register of attendance - Assessment of engagement
3) "Feedback": What the service should be *like* for service users, how should they choose to engage with it? What is happening *on the day?*	- 'Show of hands' at the end of every session - Whiteboard for recording thoughts and feelings - Questionnaire for users every six sessions - Interviews with a sample of users
4) "Outcomes": Short term changes or benefits your users may get from the service (eg changes in **knowledge**, **attitudes** and **behaviour**)	- Questionnaires (as above) - Perceptions of art teachers on development / engagement in lessons
5) "Impact ": The long-term change that you want service users to achieve for themselves	- Long term wellbeing comparison study

KEEPING PEOPLE AND THEIR DATA SAFE

The ICO encourages us to keep sharing data, but...

- **Keep it clear** - be clear, open and honest with people about what you are doing with their personal information.
- **Keep it lawful** - do you have the person's consent? Or would they expect you to collect/use/store their information in that way?
- **Keep it secure** - share files securely online, use password protection
- **Keep it to a minimum** - only collect, use and keep what you actually need!



From https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-community-groups-and-covid-19/

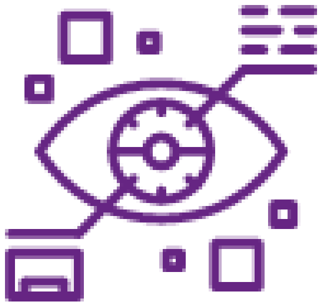
WORKSHEET

Part 1: What routine data have you already got?

Use the five types of data framework to think about the routine data you *already* collect and hold. Don't forget some of this information might be found/could be reused for GDPR compliance purposes.

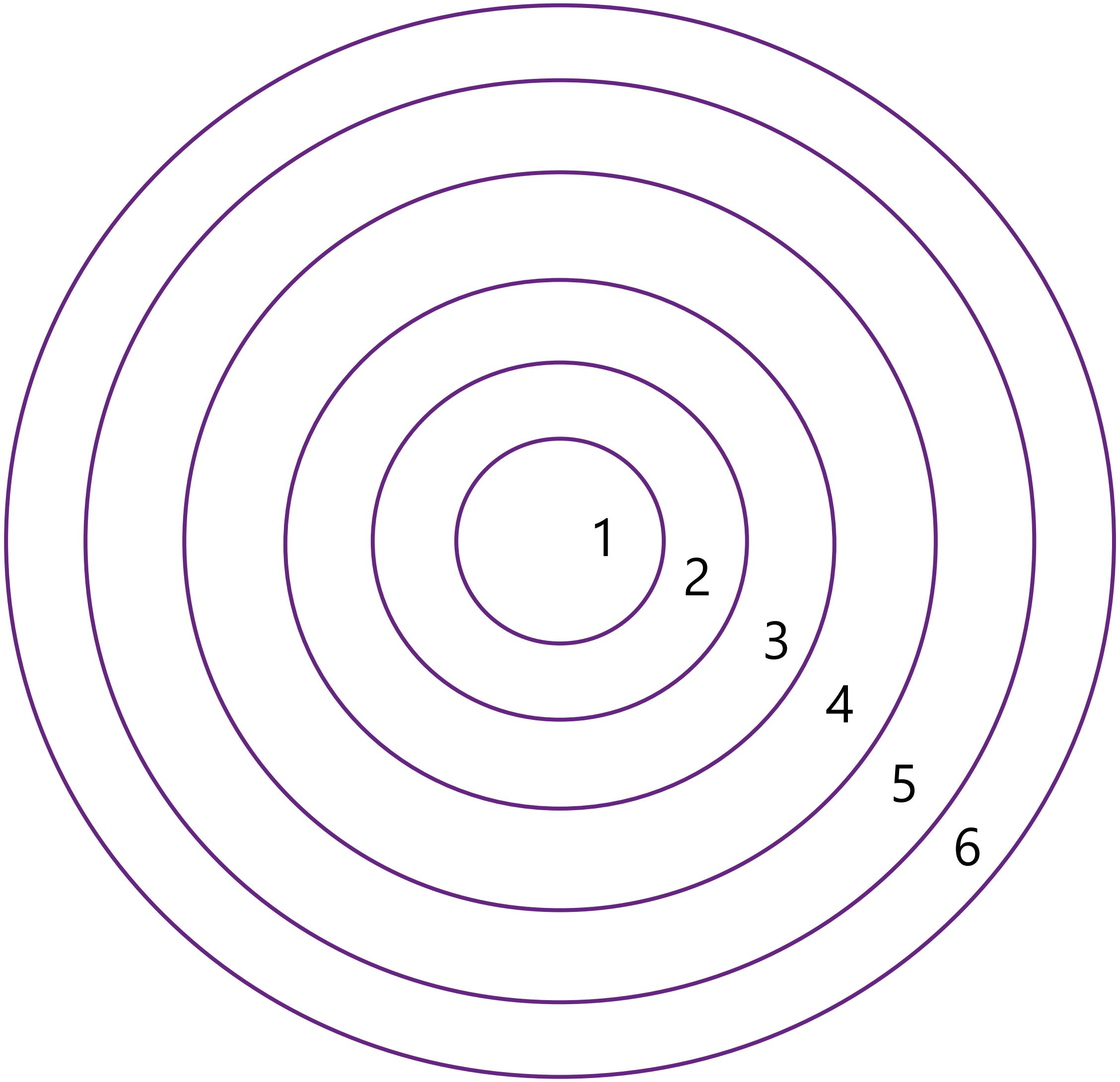
Type of data *(Find out more about the 5 types of data [here](#).)*	**Do you have any of this type of data?**	**What data do you collect? Who do you collect it from?** *Do you collect data from service users, their family or carers? Do you collect any data from referral agencies?*	**How is the data collected?** *Who collects the data? How, when and how often? Do you use paper forms, an online survey, chats?*	**Where is this data held?** *Is this in a database, spreadsheet or paper? Is it held on local computer files, shared files or online? Who is it available to? Do you still have access to it?*	**How is this data used currently?** *Who analyses the data and who uses the results of the analysis? Is it used internally or externally?*
User data Characteristics of the people you're reaching.	Y	Eg. Names, date of birth, postcode, why people signed up	Eg. Sign up forms (online)	Eg. some in database, some in sign-up forms saved online. Everyone can access.	Eg. We sometimes look at why people signed up. Not really using other data.
Engagement data How individuals interact with your service, and to what extent.	Y	Eg. attendance record, enquiries, social media engagement, website views.	Eg. attendance log weekly (online), emails & phone calls with project team, website & facebook analytics.	Eg. spreadsheet saved online. Everyone can access.	Eg. We check attendance log weekly to send reminder emails to people who haven't turned up.
Feedback data What people think about the service.	Y	Eg. what people like & didn't like (free responses)	Eg. online survey and sometimes phone conversations	Eg. back-end of Survey Monkey account, everyone can access.	Eg. We read feedback forms to get quotes, report to funders and to change activities for next time
Outcomes data Short-term changes, benefits or assets people have got from the service.	Y	Eg. Before & after measures about loneliness or wellbeing	Eg. before & after online survey of a sample of people. 6 months apart.	Eg. Back end of survey monkey, then analysed in a spreadsheet saved online	Eg. reporting to funders
Impact data Long-term difference that resulted from the service. *Have outcomes (above) helped people to change their lives for the better?*	N				

GETTING THE MOST FROM THIS SESSION



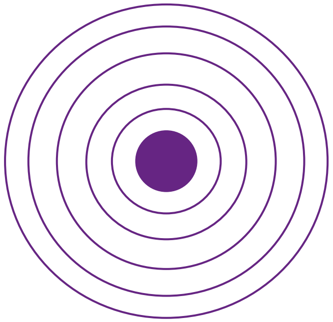
- Work fast
- Process not product
- Share what you know and what you don’t
- Don’t worry about making mistakes
- Ask if you don’t understand

CIRCLES OF DATA



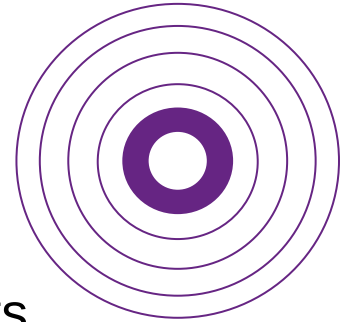
1. WHO IS YOUR MAIN USER GROUP?

Write or draw your main user group in the middle circle.



1 minute

2. HOW DO YOUR USERS INTERACT WITH YOU?

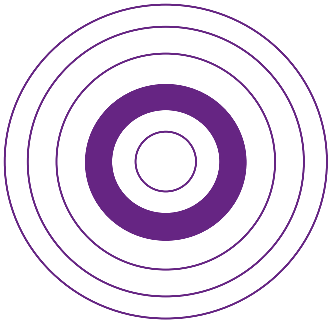


- **In your next circle, write or draw the ways that these users interact with your organisation.**
  Eg accessing info via your website, attending events, applying for funding etc. It might be something you do directly or through a partner.

- **When doing this with your team, use your second pen to draw some arrows showing links between user groups and how they interact with you**

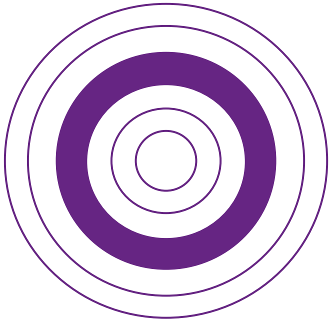
3. WHAT DATA DO YOU COLLECT?

In circle 3 write or draw the information you collect about users.



1) "User": The characteristics of the service users you aim to reach
2) "Engagement": The extent to which people should use the service. How often and for how long?
3) "Feedback": What the service should be *like* for service users, how should they choose to engage with it? What is happening *on the day?*
4) "Outcomes": Short term changes or benefits your users may get from the service (eg changes in **knowledge**, **attitudes** and **behaviour**)

4. HOW DO YOU COLLECT DATA?



- **In circle 4, write or draw how you currently collect data for the interactions you've mapped.** You might use the same method for multiple services – e.g. using Google Analytics to track multiple online services. You only need to add it to the circle once.

- **Use your second pen to draw some arrows showing which methods you're using for which services**

4. HOW DO YOU COLLECT DATA?

Google Analytics

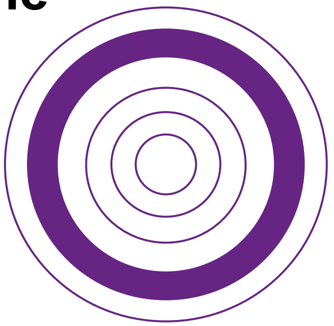
MailChimp

SurveyMonkey

hotjar

5. WHERE IS THIS DATA HELD?

- **In circle 5, write or draw what you're doing with the data you collect.**
- Consider whether;
  - you combine data from multiple collection methods?
  - you type up or digitise feedback given on paper or in person?
  - you export it from one system into another?
  - Where do you store your data?



- **Use your second pen to draw some arrows showing how you move data from collection to storage**

5. WHERE IS THIS DATA HELD?

NPC

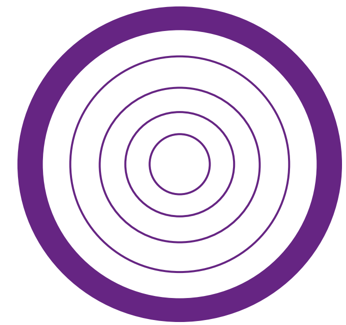
Microsoft® Access

Excel

Microsoft Azure

salesforce

6. HOW IS THIS DATA USED CURRENTLY?

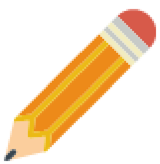


- **In circle 6, write or draw how you analyse and interpret your data.**
- This might happen for your annual reports or quarterly board reports.
- It might happen when teams review their work.
- Who uses the results of the analysis? Is it used internally or externally?

- **Use your second pen to draw some arrows showing which methods you're using for which services**

NPC

6. HOW IS THIS DATA USED CURRENTLY?



Excel

Google Analytics

Google Sheets

VISUAL.IS

tableau

Power BI

GECKOBOARD

6. HOW IS THIS DATA USED CURRENTLY?

Fundraising

Presentations

Research reports

Reporting

Staff meetings

Influencing stakeholders

Adapting services

Engaging users

BRINGING IT BACK TO THE WORKSHEET

Part 1: What routine data have you already got?

Use the five types of data framework to think about the routine data you *already* collect and hold. Don't forget some of this information might be found/could be reused for GDPR compliance purposes.

Type of data (*Find out more about the 5 types of data here.*)	**Do you have any of this type of data?** *Y / N*	**What data do you collect? Who do you collect it from?** *Do you collect data from service users, their family or carers? Do you collect any data from referral agencies?*	**How is the data collected?** *Who collects the data? How, when and how often? Do you use paper forms, an online survey, chats?*	**Where is this data held?** *Is this in a database, spreadsheet or paper? Is it held on local computer files, shared files or online? Who is it available to? Do you still have access to it?*	**How is this data used currently?** *Who analyses the data and who uses the results of the analysis? Is it used internally or externally?*

Circles 1 - 3 feeds into this box.

Circles 4 feeds into this box.

Circles 5 feeds into this box.

Circles 6 feeds into this box.

BRINGING IT BACK TO THE WORKSHEET

NPC

Part 2: How can we use this data?

Once you have mapped out the data you currently collect in Part 1, it's time to consider how useful that data really is to you. This will help you to decide what information to review when making decisions about your services. It's worth starting with what's useful to you **right now**, and then considering what might be useful to you in the future.

Type of data	Why is this data useful? *What does this information tell you? Who do you collect it for? Can you pinpoint the data that is useful to you?*	Do you really need this data? *Does it help to inform decision-making for your work? Could you get the same info elsewhere?*	Is the data accurate and consistent? *Data is only useful if it is accurate and consistent.*	Are we missing anything important? *Consider what you would like your data to tell you. What questions aren't being answered? Does anyone else have this info?*

The lines connecting each circle will help you to answer the above questions. We have also included some discussion points on the next slide to support your discussions.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER...

1. **Where are the gaps?** Is there data you collect but don't analyse or report? Why are you collecting it? What decisions do you need to make that you don't have good enough data for?
2. **Time = money. What's taking up a lot of time?** Where could you save time?
3. **Where could external data be useful?** Can you compare your data against a public source?

REFLECTIONS QUESTIONS

- How did you find this exercise?
- What did you learn?
- Did anything surprise you?

BCF: WRITEUP OF JUNE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION (SESSION 3)

It's been quite difficult. Some things we thought we were going to be doing we can't do. You have to be quite nimble in how you change plans and shape things as you go along… having this data is a really important part of that decision-making process.

Session participant

NPC held its third session of a series of Collaborative Learning sessions for the Building Connections Fund on Tuesday 30th June 2020. A total of 14 grant-holders joined the webinar over the course of the session. The session encouraged grant-holders to start thinking about what data they were collecting and why. In particular, the session covered:

- Updates from NPC about progress on the BCF evaluation and a recap of emerging themes from May's session.
- Brief presentation from NPC on key questions to ask when collecting data to inform decision-making, and an explanation of the '5 types' of data.
- Group 'circles of data' exercise looking at some key questions to consider about data collection and use.
- Plenary discussion with feedback from each group.

Grant-holders were sent a worksheet in advance of the session to help them think about the types of data they collect and how they are used. The group exercise was designed to get grant-holders thinking about the first section of the worksheet, with the idea that they could fill out the rest of the worksheet with their respective teams after the end of the session. A copy of the slides used can be found here, and a copy of the worksheet used can be found here.

NPC's 4 key questions

The 4 key questions about data collection that NPC presented to grant-holders were:

1. What decisions do I need to make now/soon/in the future?
2. What information do we need to make those decisions?
3. **Have I already got that info? Is it possible to collect that data?**
4. **What am I going to do with the data once I've got it?**

The purpose of the session was to focus on questions 3 and 4, to help grant-holders consider what information they need, how they will collect it, and how it will be used.

Worksheet for grant-holders

Part 1: What routine data have you already got?

Use the five types of data framework to think about the routine data you *already* collect and hold. Don't forget some of this information might be found/could be reused for GDPR compliance purposes.

Type of data *(Find out more about the 5 types of data here.)*	**Do you have any of this type of data?**	**What data do you collect? Who do you collect it from?** *Do you collect data from service users, their family or carers? Do you collect any data from referral agencies?*	**How is the data collected?** *Who collects the data? How, when and how often? Do you use paper forms, an online survey, chats?*	**Where is this data held?** *Is this in a database, spreadsheet or paper? Is it held on local computer files, shared files or online? Who is it available to? Do you still have access to it?*	**How is this data used currently?** *Who analyses the data and who uses the results of the analysis? Is it used internally or externally?*
User data Characteristics of the people you're reaching.	Y	Eg. Names, date of birth, postcode, why people signed up	Eg. Sign up forms (online)	Eg. some in database, some in sign-up forms saved online. Everyone can access.	Eg. We sometimes look at why people signed up. Not really using other data.
Engagement data How individuals interact with your service, and to what extent.	Y	Eg. attendance record, enquiries, social media engagement, website views	Eg. attendance log weekly (online), emails & phone calls with project team, website & facebook analytics	Eg. spreadsheet saved online. Everyone can access.	Eg. We check attendance log weekly to send reminder emails to people who haven't turned up.
Feedback data What people think about the service	Y	Eg. what people like & didn't like (free responses)	Eg. online survey and sometimes phone conversations	Eg. back-end of Survey Monkey account, everyone can access	Eg. We read feedback forms to get quotes, report to funders, and to change activities for next time
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Impact data Long-term difference that resulted from the service. *Have outcomes (above) helped people to change their lives for the better?*	N				

Grant-holders were asked to download a worksheet prior to the session. The session aimed to get grant-holders thinking through Part 1 of the worksheet (pictured above), with the view that they would complete the rest of the worksheet within their organisations after the session.

Circles of Data exercise

Really useful session, thank you. Made me think about how different parts of the organisation could share info about the same client to build a better picture of the person's journey.

Session participant

Grant-holders took part in a 'circles of data' exercise, which was designed to be a simple and quick way of getting participants started on the worksheet, without having to classify the information into the 5 data types immediately. Participants were asked to draw 6 concentric circles (see slide 14), each representing one of 6 questions about data collection. Grant-holders wrote down relevant answers in each circle and then drew connecting lines between the different circles, as a way of visualising how data processes worked in their organisations.

In the first and second circles, grant-holders wrote their **main user group** (e.g. young people), and the main **ways that their users interact with them** (e.g. via online group sessions).

In the third circle, participants noted **what data they collect about their users**. Examples included:

- **User data** such as demographic information. For example, one grant-holder described collecting user data on the age and condition of children they worked with, as well as ethnic background and postcode.

- **Feedback data**, such as Zoom polls. Some participants noted that collecting feedback data through online surveys was proving less effective, with lower response rates than collecting surveys in-person. One participant mentioned using online events as a way to collect feedback in new ways – for example, inviting attendees to help staff in completing end-of-event reviews, which are usually completed by staff only. Another participant mentioned collecting anecdotal and spontaneous feedback via Whatsapp messaging.

- **Engagement data**, such as registered lists of attendees to online sessions or group calls.

- **Outcomes data,** such as observations from staff about service users' progress. One participant who worked with older people in sheltered housing settings mentioned the use of both staff observations on phone calls and informal feedback from community partners in recording outcomes data.

In the fourth circle, grant-holders noted **how they collect this data**. Examples included:

- **Anecdotal data** from users, for example through phone calls with staff.

- **Online polls and surveys.**

- **Staff observations** during online sessions.

- **Social media.** For example, one participant mentioned that their Facebook groups allowed staff greater insight into how service users interacted and supported one another during difficult times, whereas previously they had not been aware of how friendships and informal support networks had formed between their users.

The fifth circle contained information about **where data was held**, and grant-holders cited a range of methods including excel records and Google Drive storage.

In the final circle, participants noted **how this data is currently used**. Examples included:

- **Making changes to services or designing new services.** For example, one organisation collected data about their service users' needs and found they were feeling isolated and trapped in their homes, and so organised some socially distanced outdoor park sessions.

- **Identifying users in need of extra/different support.** For example, identifying those service users who were most at-risk during lockdown and arranging befriending services or food/medicine deliveries by joining up with other agencies.

- **Raising awareness of issues**. One participant mentioned using research on the impact of Covid on families during Children's Hospice Week to raise awareness of their work.

- **Demonstrating impact**, for example in funding bids.

- **Sharing best practice and findings** with the wider sector, for example through blog writing.

- **Planning for future delivery,** for example deciding how to adapt services as lockdown eases.

There's been quite a few surprises… we realised [some of the] people who come to our centre never made it obvious before that they're on their own and have no family network… for some we had that data that we could then link up and help quite vulnerable ladies out there who are on their own right now, people who are shielding… all these kinds of information have helped us to get people through really tough spots right now.

Session participant

We're using it [data], given that we're in a time of rapid change to our delivery models, to understand which things are working best, to then plan for the next period… it feels like there's a lot of cultural interest in the sector at the moment in sharing best practice and sharing how we're adapting.

Session participant

Data collection challenges

Grant-holders also mentioned some difficulties and challenges they had been facing with regards to data collection. This included:

- Challenges in constantly changing and adapting during the lockdown period.
- Difficulties getting survey responses remotely rather than collecting data in-person.
- Joining-up data collection carried out by different staff/teams.
- Balancing the need to collect data on users with sensitivity.

Worksheet: Review your existing data

Many charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups have to make tough decisions about their activities and resources. We're all looking for useful data (basically information) to help us make those decisions and communicate well with the people we work with, staff, volunteers, partners and funders.

Perhaps you and your colleagues have questions like these...

- "What data have we already got about the people we work with and our activities?"
- "What data would help us to make decisions now?"
- "What data are we missing that might help us to make better decisions?"

This worksheet should help you to answer these questions, so that ultimately you can **better collect and use data to shape your organisation's services or influence change.**

How to use the worksheet:

- The worksheet is split into three sections; Part one explores what existing data you have, Part two explores how and why you use it, and Part three explores what this means for your planning now. Work through each section in order.
- The worksheet can be completed independently or with input from colleagues. It should take 30-60 minutes to complete, depending on the amount of information you have and your familiarity with the information.

Name of project / organisation	
Key groups of people that your project/ organisation targets	
How do these people interact with your project/organisation?	

- We've tried to make this useful for a range of situations, but it's up to you to consider what's helpful for your context. We suggest focusing on 1 target group, project, or service to start with, then you can consider other projects/services with similar groups.

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Part 2: How can we use this data?

Once you have mapped out the data you currently collect in Part 1, it's time to consider how useful that data really is to you. This will help you to decide what information to review when making decisions about your services. It's worth starting with what's useful to you **right now,** and then considering what might be useful to you in the future.

Type of data	**Why is this data useful?** *What does this information tell you? Who do you collect it for? Can you pinpoint the data that is useful to you?*	**Do you really need this data?** *Does it help to inform decision-making for your work? Could you get the same info elsewhere?*	**Is the data accurate and consistent?** *Data is only useful if it is accurate and consistent.*	**Are we missing anything important?** *Consider what you would like your data to tell you. What questions aren't being answered? Does anyone else have this info?*
User data				
Engagement data				
Feedback data				
Outcomes data				
Impact data				

Part 3: What do we do now?

Consider what you have learned about your data from the questions in Part 1 and Part 2 and outline what this means for your day-to-day work. Also, remember to think about how you can use this information to communicate with your stakeholders in marketing documents, commissioner reports, funding bids etc. You might structure your actions like this:

“I will [continue or start] collecting…”	**… “because it will help us to…”** *Remember: You could use your notes from above to answer this*

“I will stop collecting…” *Remember: If you do not need the data now or in the future, consider whether you can stop collecting it. If it is not possible to collect certain data accurately, it is not worth collecting it at all.*	**… “because it will help us to…”** *Remember: You could use your notes from above to answer this*

“I will change the way I collect…”	**… “because it will help us to…”** *Remember: You could use your notes from above to answer this*

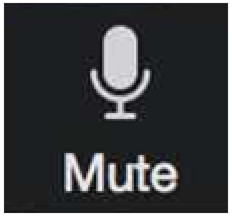
“I will change the way I use…” *Remember: If there is potential to make better use of it, work out what needs to change to make this happen.*	**… “because it will help us to…”** *Remember: You could use your notes from above to answer this*

BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

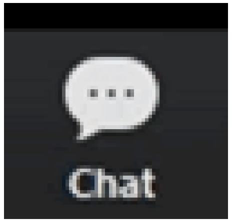
Session #4

WELCOME! WE WILL START SOON

Before we begin:



Please mute yourself when you're not speaking.
You can unmute during the break-out group discussion, or use the chat box to contribute.



Please introduce yourself on the chat.
Use Chat for questions.
Clarifying questions will be answered as we go.
Other questions will be answered at the end or afterwards via email.

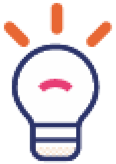
- **We are recording this session**
- **We will write up notes and share them within the BCF and eventually on our public NPC Labs page**
- **No names and organisations will be used**

SCHEDULE OF TODAY'S LEARNING SESSION

- 5 minutes intro

- 20 minutes – Icebreaker and User needs breakout discussion, group feedback and survey results

- 20 minutes – Future planning breakout discussion, group feedback and survey results



- 10 minute presentation on framework to think about collecting and using data and evidence
- 5 minutes close and next steps

UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Want to share some great work you've been doing?**
  Email me at thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

- **For those of you who haven't already – please complete the survey by the deadline, August 4th**

- **Emerging tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: CHANGING NEEDS

- In small breakout groups, a quick intro/ice-breaker

- 10 minutes

In each breakout group:
- Please introduce yourself and your organisation.
- Please share your thoughts on:
  - How do you think your user's needs will change over the next 3 months?

- Then we'll feedback to the whole group

SNEAK PEAK AT SURVEY RESPONSES:

How do you anticipate the needs of your users will change as social distancing restrictions are eased?

*“We will be moving back to face to face work in August or September as **young people are ready for this and need it**. We will be taking advantage of the outdoors and good summer weather by doing all groups outside. All parts of young people's lives will be coming back in one way or another to some kind of normality, and therefore we need to respond and do the same.”*

*“We are anticipating our service-users **needs intensifying** over the coming months as more people begin to **feel the mental health repercussions of having been in lockdown** for so long and more **uncertainty because of an unstable economy**.”*

*“…many **people will feel anxious about attending in-person activities** and for those people, a sense of loneliness could become more acute as everyone else goes back to a relative normality…”*

*“…work to do around **bereavement** and also **encouraging people to start coming out again…”***

*“we anticipate that older and younger people will become more **divided as younger people feel they can reintegrate** into their social and economic lives **but older people see this as a huge danger to their health** and so withdraw further from society.”*

SOME EMERGING THEMES

Different groups need specific support:

- **Generational divide**
- **Some eager to start normal life again** (particularly YP)
- **Some not ready to exit isolation** (particularly older people, those with LTCs)
- Anxiety of reintegration
- **Needs of some intensifying** – economic problems, mental health problems…
- Increasing need for work around **bereavement**

Identifying and responding to these various needs can be supported through data collections and analysis

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: UPCOMING DECISIONS

- In smaller breakout groups

- 10 minutes

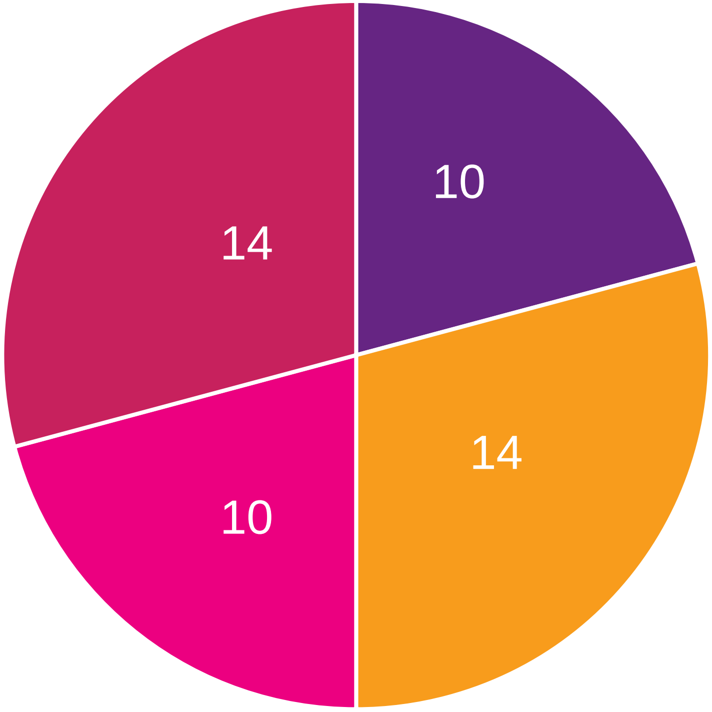
In each breakout group:
- Please share your thoughts on:
  - What key delivery decisions do you or your organisation have coming up as lockdown loosens?
  - How are you thinking of approaching this decision?

- Then feedback we'll feedback to the whole group

SNEAK PEAK AT SURVEY RESULTS:

How do you anticipate your project / service delivery changing over the next 3-6 months as social distancing restrictions are eased?

- Our work will remain postponed / closed until further notice
- We plan to continue delivering our project / service as we have done during lockdown / COVID-19
- We plan to combine elements of our pre- and post- COVID delivery models
- We plan to gradually move back to our pre-COVID delivery model



SNEAK PEAK AT SURVEY RESPONSES:

How do you anticipate your project / service delivery changing over the next 3-6 months as social distancing restrictions are eased?

*"We **hope to deliver some small group face-to-face sessions** over the summer but overall we are **preparing for a second wave** in September and so the majority of our services **will continue running remotely**."*

*"We will also **continue to offer telephone befriending and encourage activities at home** for those who don't want to go out."*

*"Keeps the **best part of Covid-19 response work**, while also – depending on how safe it is and the advice – **starting slowly to reintegrate our traditional face-to-face** programmes in small groups and at appropriate distances."*

*"We will also return to visiting befriending **when able."***

*"…**dependent on government guidance**, the **needs of the young adults**, the **willingness of staff and volunteers** and the **availability and level COVID safety offered by the venues** we would use."*

*"Over the summer we will be working one-to-one or in very small groups face-to-face. **It's hard to tell yet when we will return to full group delivery** but we do not plan to make remote delivery the norm - although **we may use remote services for specific pieces of work** in the future"*

*"We're looking at that can still operate during any **ways to integrate both in-person sessions and remote delivery, as well as looking at a flexible model** their lock-downs, either local or national."*

SOME EMERGING THEMES

A lot of uncertainty – which is understandable!

Depending on a lot of factors:

- "When it's safe" "when we are able"
- Possible **second wave,** or further **local or national lockdowns**
- **Government guidance**
- **Willingness** of users, staff and volunteers
- Venue practicalities

Approaches:

- **Moving slowly, cautiously**
- **Testing** out approaches
- **Blended approaches** – best of both
- Maintaining some approaches (telephone befriending)

Many of these questions can be supported with good data collection and analysis

APPLYING THE THREE STEPS PROCESS WE INTRODUCED IN MAY TO THESE DECISIONS

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions

2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data

3. Work out how the data can be best used

STEP 1. WORK OUT WHAT INFORMATION YOU NEED TO MAKE DECISIONS.

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out hoe the data can be best used

A) **Consider 5 types of data:** How can they help you?

B) **Identify key questions:** What questions do you need answered?

C) **Prioritise questions:** Which of these are urgent now? Which of these aren't urgent right now but will become important in the medium- longer term?

A) CONSIDER 5 TYPES OF DATA

Types of data
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.
4) Outcomes: Short-term changes or benefits that users experience as a result of your activities.
5) Impact: The long-term change that you want users to achieve.

B) IDENTIFY KEY QUESTIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face? • What new issues / concerns do people need help with? • How are these issues different to normal?
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• Are people engaging well with a new approach? • How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent? • How are new methods of reaching people changing how they engage?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• Is a new approach meeting peoples' needs? • What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement? • Which aspects of new activities work well? Not so well?

C) PRIORITISE QUESTIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face? • What new issues / concerns do people need help with? • How are these issues different to normal?
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• Are people engaging well with a new approach? • How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent? • How are new methods of reaching people changing how they engage?
3) Feedback: What users think about your service.	• Is a new approach meeting peoples' needs? • What do people think about the new activities and different methods of engagement? • Which aspects of new activities work well? Not so well?

STEP 2. WORK OUT IF IT IS POSSIBLE TO COLLECT THAT DATA.

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions → 2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data → 3. Work out hoe the data can be best used

A) **Consider what's already collected:** Do we already have the data? And/or is it available anywhere else?

B) **Consider ease and method:** Is it possible to collect? How will you collect it?

C) **Consider safety and ethics:** Is it possible to collect the data? Is it safe? Is it ethical?

A) CONSIDER WHAT'S ALREADY COLLECTED; EXAMPLE

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What is already collected?
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face?	• Casually asking people what how they are feeling
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent?	• Registers

B) CONSIDER EASE …

Is it possible to collect?

- Do we have staff/volunteer capacity to gather, store and analyse that data?
- Do people have the knowledge, skills and technology required to provide data via phone or online if necessary?

How will you collect it? (method)

B) …AND METHOD; EXAMPLE

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What could be collected
1) User: The characteristics of the people or organisations you aim to reach.	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face?	• Polls / very short surveys • Short structured conversations
2) Engagement: The extent to which people use your activities. How often? For how long?	• How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent?	• Registers

C) CONSIDER SAFETY AND ETHICS

Is it safe and ethical?

- Can we follow government guidelines about social distancing while collecting the data?
- Is it an appropriate question to be asking someone at the moment?
- Can we collect data in an accessible and inclusive way so that everyone can participate if they want to?
- Would we be able to ensure safeguarding processes are adhered to?
- Will people be able to provide informed consent?

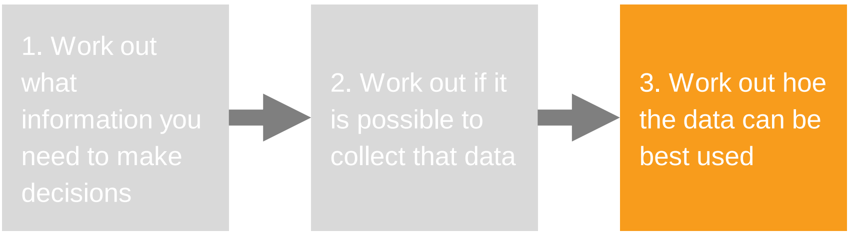
If the answer to any of these is **no**, perhaps reconsider if this is necessary

The ICO encourages us to keep sharing data, but...

- **Keep it clear** - be clear, open and honest with people about what you are doing with their personal information.
- **Keep it lawful** - do you have the person's consent? Or would they expect you to collect/use/store their information in that way?
- **Keep it secure** - share files securely online, use password protection
- **Keep it to a minimum** - only collect, use and keep what you actually need!

From https://ico.org.uk/about-the-ico/news-and-events/blog-community-groups-and-covid-19/

STEP 3. WORK OUT HOW THE DATA CAN BE BEST USED



A) **Integrate data into delivery decisions:** How will the data and it's insights be integrated into delivery?

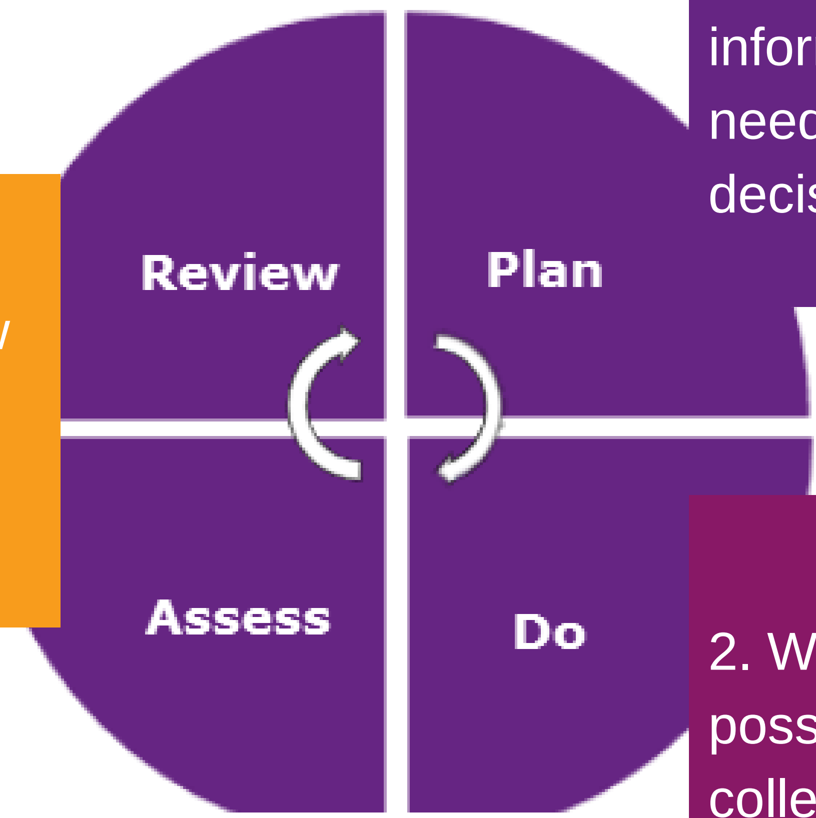
B) **How can we use this data to continually learn and improve?**

A) INTEGRATE DATA INTO DELIVERY DECISIONS

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What could be collected	How to integrate into delivery decisions
1) User:	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face?	• Polls / very short surveys • Short structured conversations	• Compare poll results over time to see how peoples attitudes are changing • Use short structured conversations to dig into any underlying factors. Ensure you have representatives from different groups.
2) Engagement:	• How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent?	• Registers	• Compare registers for different types of services over time to see how peoples' attendance and engagement is changing

B) WORK OUT HOW WE CAN USE THIS DATA TO CONTINUALLY LEARN AND IMPROVE

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions



2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data

3. Work out how the data can be best used

3 STEPS TO THINKING ABOUT COLLECTING AND USING DATA/EVIDENCE

1. Work out what information you need to make decisions
2. Work out if it is possible to collect that data
3. Work out how the data can be best used

THANK YOU

Thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

BCF: WRITEUP OF JULY COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION (SESSION 4)

NPC held its fourth session of a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for the Building Connections Fund on Wednesday 29th July 2020. Five grant-holders joined the webinar for the session.

The session encouraged grant-holders to share their observations of changing user needs in recent weeks, and to discuss future decision-making and how this could be informed by data. In particular, the session covered:

- Updates from NPC about progress on the BCF evaluation and a reminder for grant-holders to complete the new survey, which asks organisations how they are planning to adapt in the coming months as lockdown eases. Early emerging themes and insights from the survey were shared throughout the session.
- Discussion between NPC and participants about how grant-holders believe their users' needs will change in the next three months.
- Discussion between NPC and participants about key upcoming delivery decisions that organisations will face as lockdown loosens.
- A short presentation from NPC on how these pressing decisions can be informed through data collection, by using the framework shared at the May session.

A copy of the slides used can be found here.

User Needs

The anxiety for our users about going back into normal life, and starting to reengage… for a lot of them, the self-isolation and the social distancing was something that they were doing before and they worked really hard to start having more contact with people… a few of them now feel they've gone back to old behaviours.

Session participant

The biggest difference I've noticed is between those who have family nearby and those who live alone… not everybody we work with has been in a position to form a support bubble with people, and so they're still missing that kind of contact.

Session participant

In the first part of the session, participants shared their experience of how users' needs had changed during the crisis, and how these might change again in the next few months.

Emerging themes from this discussion were:

- **Some users wanting to start meeting face-to-face again.** For some users, sessions were their only opportunity to get social contact. Users who did not have family nearby or other people to form a support bubble with during the crisis will have been especially affected by this lack of contact. Conversely, some groups of users, particularly younger people, may have already started resuming 'normal' activities in their communities, so the demand for online activities is reduced.

- **Other groups may benefit from continuing to engage online.** Online engagement may still be more accessible to some groups. For example, those who live in rural isolated communities with little access to safe transport options; those who may be anxious about leaving the house, and want to build up confidence in small steps; and those who enjoyed being upskilled during the crisis by using platforms like Zoom.

- **Anxiety among some users about re-engaging in 'normal' life.** Some users might feel they have 'regressed', as prior to lockdown they worked hard to avoid self-isolation and social distancing behaviours. There will therefore be a need to support these users to reintegrate and return to more 'helpful' behaviours.

- **Job/financial insecurity.** Many users will have been adversely affected by the crisis in terms of their work, benefits and income, as well as any physical or mental health repercussions.

- **Changing needs of umbrella group users,** for example organisations requesting information about how to safely reintroduce face-to-face activities and visits. Other organisations may need support applying for long-term funding, or support to become a more established organisation (if they were created quickly in response to the crisis).

These themes were largely similar to those emerging findings from the survey of all grant-holders, which included some groups being ready to reintegrate, some being anxious about reintegration, and economic needs intensifying.

Upcoming Decisions

We're going to have to deliver on a two-platform way forward. I can see us having to reduce or eliminate the weekly one-to-one phone calls… but my hope going forwards is that we will maintain those Zoom meetings, and hopefully if we're also able to meet we can generate some sort of training.

Session participant

Participants were asked in the second part of the session to describe their decision-making processes and the key upcoming decisions they would need to make. The most common decision was around whether to resume face-to-face delivery and in what capacity. Common key points were:

- Whether to consider a blended model, i.e. use a mix of remote sessions and face-to-face.

- Whether users would be anxious about coming to face-to-face sessions.

- Whether users would be comfortable travelling or able to travel to face-to-face sessions.

- Where to host sessions, particularly as many community venues will not be available. Two organisations noted that holding sessions outdoors could be possible during dry weather, but would significantly impact delivery, as conversations with users would no longer be in a private, enclosed space.

- How many users could attend groups whilst maintaining social distancing. One organisation commented that they had not previously had a booking policy, but might have to introduce one for safety reasons.

- Whether to try and give users a clear date for sessions re-opening in advance (to mitigate anxiety and uncertainty), or whether this will rush users/staff into situations where they are not fully comfortable.

- Whether face-to-face work could be stopped again in future (due to further lockdowns or restrictions), and if so whether it is better to remain remote until the situation is clearer.

- Whether staff would be comfortable delivering face-to-face, and whether they have been trained to meet potential new user needs brought on by the crisis.

Again, this largely matched the emerging broader survey findings, which included venue challenges and the willingness of staff, volunteers and users to re-engage face-to-face.

Applying Framework to upcoming decisions

In the third part of the session, NPC presented the framework for data collection shared during the May session, and suggested how this could be used to inform upcoming decisions.

The framework encourages grant-holders to think about what questions they need answered; what types of data they need to collect to answer these questions; how (or whether) to collect this data; and how to use this data collection to inform decision-making.

Types of data	What questions do you need answered?	What could be collected	How to integrate into delivery decisions
1) User:	• Who is ready / willing to engage face-to-face?	• Polls / very short surveys • Short structured conversations	• Compare poll results over time to see how peoples attitudes are changing • Use short structured conversations to dig into any underlying factors. Ensure you have representatives from different groups.
2) Engagement:	• How are people engaging with different types of services and to what extent?	• Registers	• Compare registers for different types of services over time to see how peoples' attendance and engagement is changing

Some participants mentioned ongoing data collection being used to inform decision-making and delivery. Examples included:

- Using phone calls, Whatsapp groups etc. to keep an informal record of what is happening in **users**' lives.

- Monitoring **attendance** at sessions and following up with users whose absence might be cause for concern.

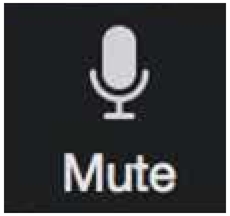
- Keeping **feedback data** and quotes from events and sessions with users in order to improve sessions.

BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

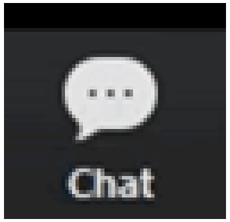
Session #5

WELCOME! WE WILL START SOON

Before we begin:



Please mute yourself when you're not speaking.
You can unmute during the break-out group discussion, or use the chat box to contribute.

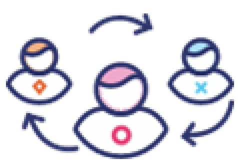


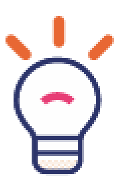
Please introduce yourself on the chat.
Use Chat for questions.
Clarifying questions will be answered as we go.
Other questions will be answered at the end or afterwards via email.

- **We are recording this session**
- **We will write up notes and share them within the BCF and eventually on our public NPC Labs page**
- **No names and organisations will be used**

SCHEDULE OF TODAY'S LEARNING SESSION

NPC





- 5 minutes – intro
- 20 minutes – Feedback from users
- 10 minutes – Survey results
- 5 minutes – Grant-holder insights on their blended model
- 15 minutes – How people are striking the right balance in their blended models
- 5 minutes – close and next steps

UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Want to share some great work you've been doing?**
  Email me at thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

- Resources from previous CLSs in one folder

- **Emerging tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: USER FEEDBACK

- In small breakout groups

- 10 minutes

In each breakout group:

- Please introduce yourself and your organisation.
- And please share a bit about:
    - What kind of feedback are you collecting from your users at the moment? (however formal or informal)
    - What kinds of things are you hearing from them? (e.g. wellbeing, desire to meet f-2-f)

- Then we'll feedback to the whole group

ENGAGEMENT HAS NOT BEEN STABLE

How, if at all, did the experiences and needs of your users change during lockdown (re loneliness or other areas such as practical support)?

- **Increased needs:** more acute needs, users engaging more than previously
- **Increased demand:** New/increased referrals and new users**,** including previous beneficiaries returning, online delivery widening access
- **Changes in depth vs breadth of engagement:** some received more new users, limited capacity meant they could only engage in a lighter touch way
- **Fluctuating engagement:** changing over time
- **Service closures:** increased referrals in some cases, decreased in others

OVER LOCKDOWN, USER NEEDS BECAME MORE COMPLEX

How, if at all, did the experiences and needs of your users change during lockdown (e.g. in relation to loneliness or other areas such as practical support)?

Organisations reported changes in need around:

- **Mental health:** many users' existing needs were exacerbated; loss of support, structure; bereavement; increased isolation; 'newly lonely' people
- **Practical issues:** short term difficulties e.g. food, shopping, medicine, digital inclusion
- **Long term issues:** future employment, housing insecurity
- Other issues: need for **information/signposting**; difficult **home environments**

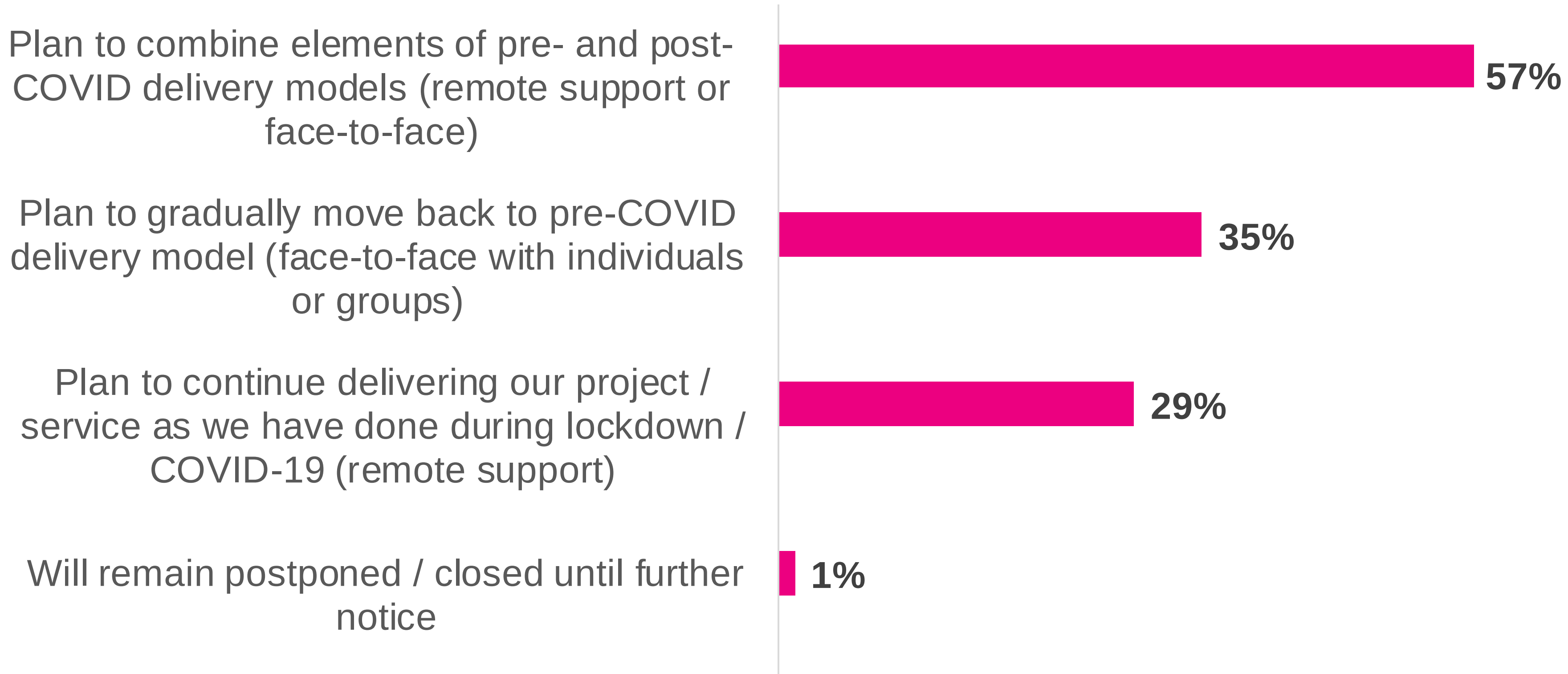
USER NEEDS LIKELY TO INCREASE AND CONTINUE TO BECOME MORE COMPLEX

How do you anticipate the needs of your users will change as social distancing restrictions are eased?

- **Need for face-to-face engagement:** some users wanting to re-engage face-to-face
- **Anxiety around re-integration:** Many will remain lonely and anxious about reintegration. Many user groups are shielding or choosing to remain isolated, which may exacerbate issues of loneliness and isolation and make returning to face-to-face delivery more difficult
- **Mental health**: concerns that users' mental health would remain difficult/deteriorate.
- Other **complex needs** may be exacerbated e.g. homelessness
- **Closures of other services** will exacerbate needs/demand

MOST ORGANISATIONS WILL ADOPT A BLENDED MODEL

How do you anticipate your project / service delivery changing over the next 3-6 months as social distancing restrictions are eased?



MOST ORGANISATIONS WILL ADOPT A BLENDED MODEL

How do you anticipate your project / service delivery changing over the next 3-6 months as social distancing restrictions are eased?

Organisations reported

- **Staying remote**: remaining fully or partially remote to enable a quick pivot in the event of a second wave
- **Face-to-face:** small groups meeting physically
- **Blended models:** helping organisations to reach many different groups with different preferences
- **Being dependant on external environment and attitudes:** government advice, venue availability, attitudes of staff/volunteers/users all feeds into decisions about re-opening face-to-face delivery

HOW TO USE DATA TO INFORM DELIVERY

- **Sarah from BANES to share their approach**

HOW TO USE DATA TO INFORM DELIVERY

- **What data is good enough?** What do you need to inform decisions? Be proportionate.

- **How will you collect it?**
  - **Are there existing sources?** Consider user data and registers
  - **How will you collect it?** Informal means can work too
  - **Is your data representative?** Make sure you don't exclude users! Get feedback and suggestions from users who *do* attend your service, those who *don't*, or you risk excluding them

- **How will you analyse and use the data?** Are there patterns that emerge between those who wants what? Are some groups facing specific barriers you can help with? Can you deliver the right amount to each group?

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: DELIVERING IN THE AUTUMN

- In small breakout groups

- 10 minutes

In each breakout group:

- Tell the group how you are planning to deliver your services in the coming months?
  - Are you using a blended model?
  - How are you deciding how much face-2-face vs remote to deliver?

- Then we'll feedback to the whole group

THANK YOU

Thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

BCF: WRITEUP OF AUGUST COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION (SESSION 5)

NPC held its fifth session of a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for the Building Connections Fund on Wednesday 26th August 2020. 9 grant-holders joined the webinar over the course of the session.

The session encouraged grant-holders to consider how future decision-making can be informed by data, particularly in relation to adopting a new 'blended' delivery model, which combines elements of an organisation's pre- and post-covid models. The session covered:

- Updates from NPC about progress on the BCF evaluation.
- Discussion between participants about how grant-holders have been collecting user feedback and any common themes.
- Presentation from NPC on major themes that emerged from the recent grant-holder survey.
- A short presentation from a staff member from Bath and North East Somerset Carers Centre (a grant-holder in the learning cohort) on their approach in using data to inform delivery.
- A short presentation from NPC and discussion with grant-holders on using data to inform delivery and on adopting a 'blended' delivery approach.

A copy of the slides used can be found here.

User feedback

Some of our clients are actually feeling better supported… some of those who were pretty much on their own anyway haven't got worse… some of the people that we work with, some of whom are incredibly confident and independent usually, even they are expressing a lot of nervousness about getting out and about because their surroundings have changed.

Session participant

We'd rather not create dependency… so it's how do we help people regain that independence.

Session participant

In the first part of the session, participants shared their experience of collecting user feedback. **Organisations discussed using a variety of methods for collecting user feedback,** including:

- Young people-led discussions where users share how they are feeling.
- Monthly phone call check-ins.
- 'Keep in touch' calls.
- Noting feedback mentioned in online sessions for volunteers.

NPC highlighted that these were all good ways to collect feedback, but could perhaps be done more systematically – such as using a few standard questions at the start of regular conversations to track how people are feeling in a way that can be compared between people and over time. In addition, NPC highlighted the importance of collecting representative data, including gathering feedback from users who are not currently engaging with services.

When discussing themes from user feedback, participants mentioned that **some users want to start meeting face-to-face again, whereas others are hesitant.** Factors influencing user preferences included:

- **Age** (older people may feel more vulnerable).
- **Digital inclusion** (those who cannot access online services may be keen to meet in person). One organisation mentioned getting a team of tech volunteers (their younger, more digitally savvy volunteers) to visit users' homes and upskill them on their own devices.
- **Location** (online services make it easier for those living further away to access support).
- **Anxiety** and confusion around Covid-19 and government guidance.

Several participants also reported that they are **struggling with practical barriers in re-engaging users face-to-face.** This includes logistical concerns (e.g. mobility access, toilet access, use of seating, availability of community venues), and confusion around interpreting government advice and guidance.

Grant-holders are also finding that **users' attitudes and behaviours appear to be changing rapidly and are difficult to predict.** For some organisations, attendance to sessions appears to fluctuate and it can be difficult to understand what is driving this behaviour. Several organisations changed their delivery model in response to Covid-19 (for example, setting up a prescription delivery service, a phone support line, or organising outdoor rather than indoor activity sessions). However, as users' needs change, these models may need to be adapted – for example, immediate practical needs may be replaced by a need for more intense mental health support.

There was a general consensus that **user needs, particularly mental health needs, have generally become more acute:**

- One participant reported that many users seemed **increasingly lonely** during the crisis period, and used their prescription phone line as a way of getting social contact.
- Another participant shared that while some users were less lonely during the crisis due to an increase in community support, others who were usually confident and independent had become **more anxious** (this organisation works with people with sight loss, and so many of their users were struggling with changed layouts in their local communities).
- Others expressed concerns that **users had become reliant on their services** during the crisis, and that they were working to help them regain their independence.

These themes were largely similar to emerging findings from the recent grant-holder survey, which highlighted the following:

- **Instability of user engagement.** Organisations have seen an increase in needs, demand, and frequent fluctuations in engagement.
- **Increasingly complex needs.** User needs such as mental health needs were exacerbated over lockdown.

- **Needs are likely to increase and become more complex as restrictions are eased.** Many users will suffer with anxiety about re-integration, and mental health needs may become more acute.

Bath and North East Somerset Carers Centre's approach

> **We focused on what we didn't know in terms of gaps in our knowledge and understanding things that we might need to talk to our service users about… so that we knew that we could make data-informed decisions.**

Staff member from Bath and North East Somerset Carers Centre

A staff member from the BANES Carers Centre delivered a short presentation on how it had used data to inform the delivery of its services during this period. It previously ran a face-to-face café programme connecting unpaid carers with each other and their local communities. As it moved to remote delivery, it focused on talking to users in order to make data-informed decisions. This involved:

- **Consequence scanning,** in order to consider both intended and unintended possible consequences of its new model, and ways to prevent or action these.
- **Piloting different approaches.** Staff knew many users would have difficulty accessing online services, and so they ran 3 pilots to gather feedback from users prior to a wider rollout.
- **Collecting data to understand changes in engagement**. When high sign-ups did not equate to attendance numbers, staff followed up with users and discovered the causes for low attendance included 'zoom fatigue', and not being able to talk openly at home.
- **Gathering user feedback about preferred methods of engagement**, by making wellbeing calls to all carers. Through this, BANES Carers Centre discovered that the majority of users prefer to connect by phone or in person. Staff are now co-designing some phone cafés to connect carers together and are piloting some outdoor face-to-face cafés. BANES Carers Centre has also reduced their number of online cafés, and will deliver more targeted promotion to increase attendance to these.
- **Researching government guidance and creating a risk assessment**, which can be combined with its user feedback in order to inform the next stages of delivery.
- **Creating a survey** to gather feedback from users who have attended online or face-to-face activities, in order to understand user preferences and barriers to engagement.

Using data to inform delivery of blended models

57% of a total 71 grant-holders who responded to NPC's recent survey said they intended to adopt a blended delivery model over the next 3-6 months, by combining elements of their pre- and post-covid models. This gives organisations greater flexibility in the event of a second wave, as well as helping them to reach many different user groups simultaneously.

In the final part of the session, NPC gave a short presentation on using data to inform delivery, encouraging participants to consider:

- **What data is good enough**, and the importance of proportionate data collection. What is needed to make the decision?
- **How this data will be collected,** including using existing sources of data, thinking through methods and collecting data that represents all user groups – especially those who don't engage as regularly, so that their views are not excluded.
- **How this data will be used and analysed**. Are there patterns that emerge around what different users want? Are some groups facing specific barriers? How can delivery be adjusted to meet the needs of each group?

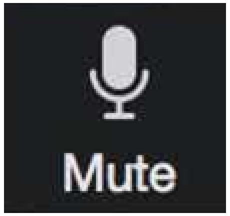
NPC also suggested making sure that organisations develop clear plans for reviewing data and implementing the results into decision-making. This includes scheduling decision-making meetings in advance and making sure staff have access to the relevant data beforehand.

BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

Session #6

WELCOME! WE WILL START SOON

Before we begin:



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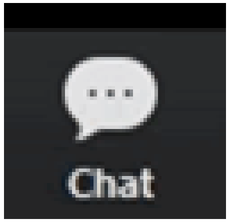

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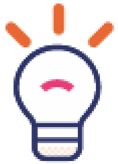
Other questions will be answered at the end or afterwards via email.

- **We are recording this session**
- **We will write up notes and share them within the BCF and eventually on our public NPC Labs page**
- **No names and organisations will be used**

ICEBREAKER – IN 'CHAT'

- Name
- Organisation
- Something new, useful or surprising you have learnt this month that might help others

SCHEDULE OF TODAY'S SESSION



- 5 minutes – Introduction
- 10 minutes – Refresher on Theory of Change
- 15 minutes – Focus on Impacts
- 15 minutes – Focus on Outcomes and Mechanisms of Change
- 10mins- How to apply this thinking?
- 5 minutes – close and next steps

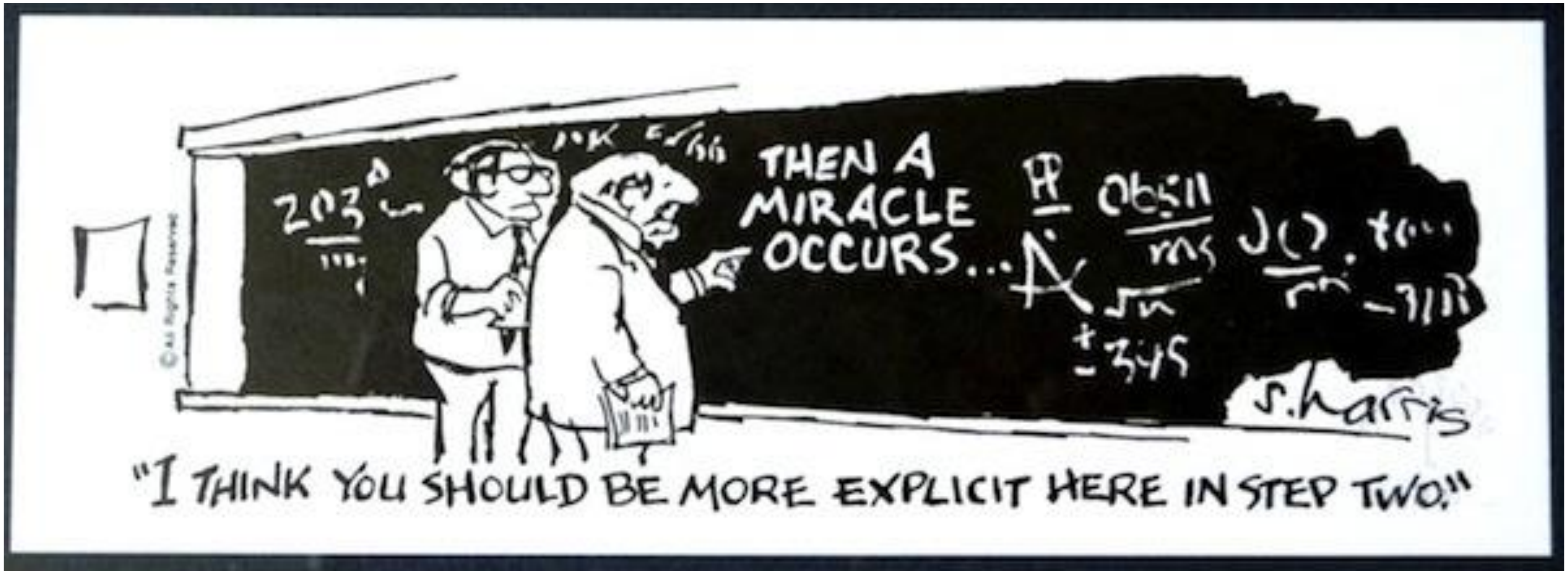
UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Want to share some great work you've been doing?** Email Thomas at thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org
- Resources from previous CLSs in one folder
- **Emerging tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**
- **https://labs.thinknpc.org/category/building-connections-fund/**

THEORY OF CHANGE: PURPOSE

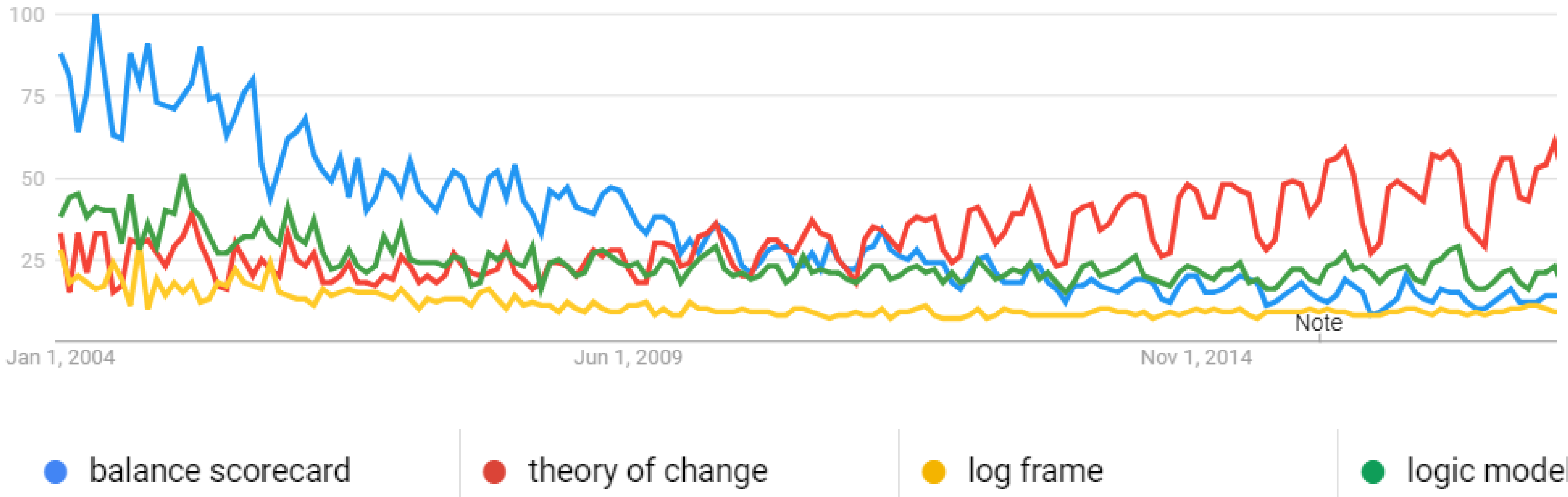
- A statement of what you want to happen—a hypothesis.
- Applicable to projects, programmes or organisations – anything aiming to do good
- Distinct from more detailed project planning – which comes later

THEORY OF CHANGE: PURPOSE



Mentoring - - - - - ? - - - - → Reduction in youth unemployment

THEORY OF CHANGE: HISTORY



THEORY OF CHANGE

https://www.inspiringimpact.org/what-is-impact-practice/

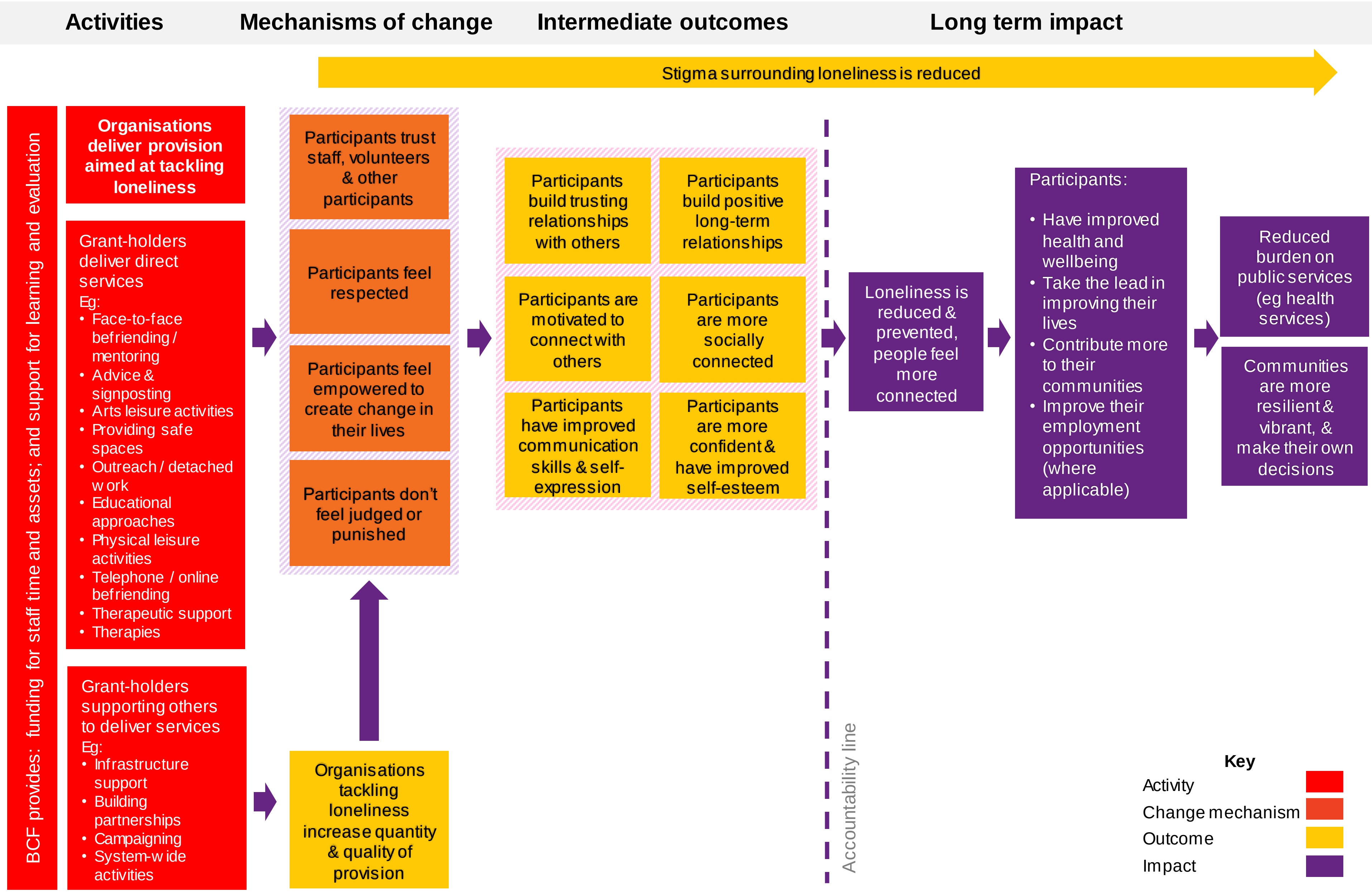
NPC

Activities	Mechanisms of change	Intermediate outcomes	Long term impact
Activities: • List • List • List..	Mechanism of Change x1 Mechanism of Change x2 Mechanism of Change x3	Outcome x 1 Outcome x 2 Outcome x 3 Outcome x 4	Impact
The actions, tasks and work a project or organisation carries. Can also be called processes or interventions.	How people will experience your work and how that experience will encourage or spark them to make changes (what they will say, do, think differently)	Shorter-term changes that happen as steps on the way to other outcomes and impact.	Longer-term effects of a project or organisation's work that people achieve for themselves.

Accountability line

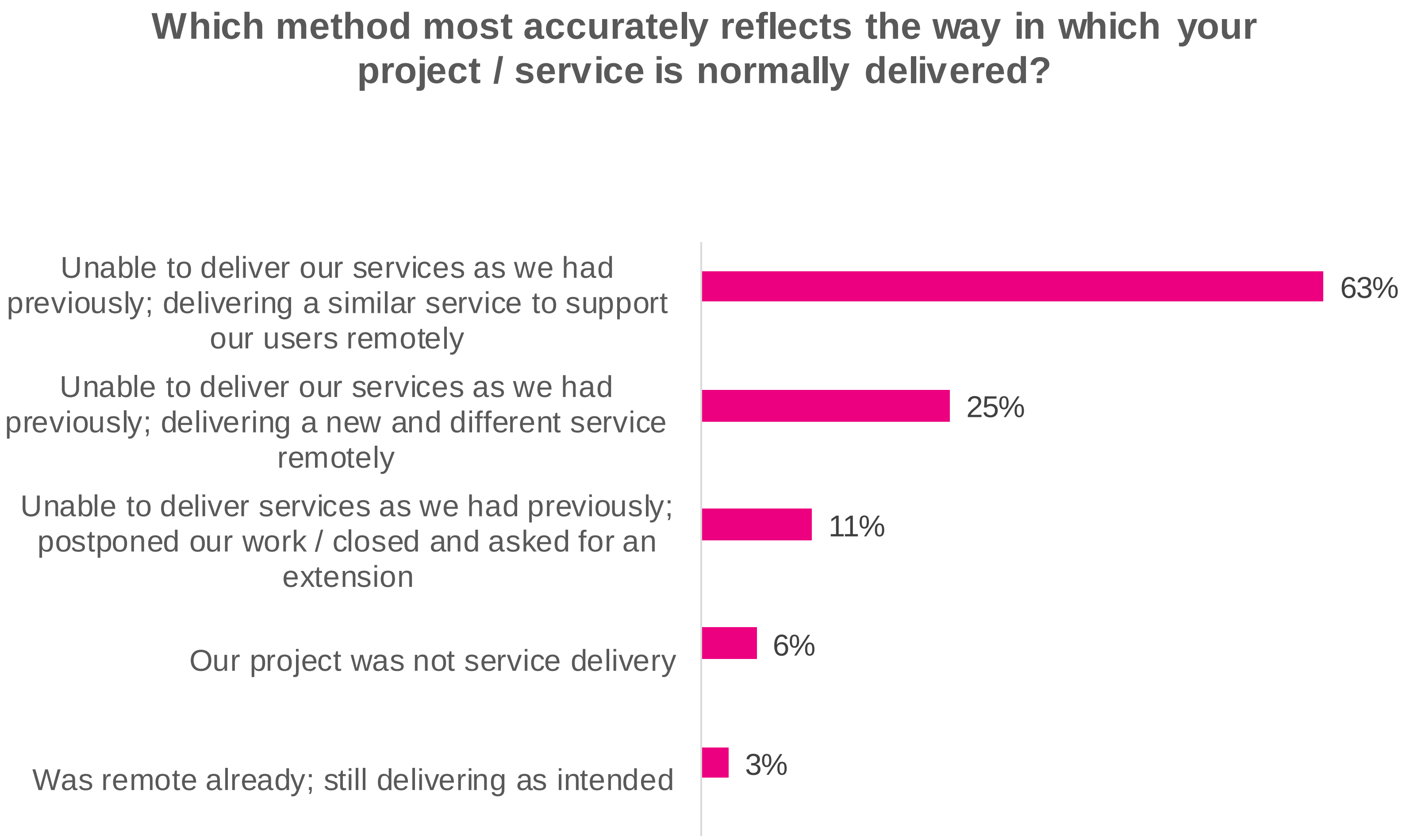
Key

- Activity
- Change mechanism
- Outcome
- Impact



Activities
Mechanisms of change
Intermediate outcomes
Long term impact
Stigma surrounding loneliness is reduced
BCF provides: funding for staff time and assets; and support for learning and evaluation
Organisations deliver provision aimed at tackling loneliness
Grant-holders deliver direct services
Eg:
• Face-to-face befriending / mentoring
• Advice & signposting
• Arts leisure activities
• Providing safe spaces
• Outreach / detached work
• Educational approaches
• Physical leisure activities
• Telephone / online befriending
• Therapeutic support
• Therapies
Grant-holders supporting others to deliver services
Eg:
• Infrastructure support
• Building partnerships
• Campaigning
• System-wide activities
Participants trust staff, volunteers & other participants
Participants feel respected
Participants feel empowered to create change in their lives
Participants don't feel judged or punished
Organisations tackling loneliness increase quantity & quality of provision
Participants build trusting relationships with others
Participants build positive long-term relationships
Participants are motivated to connect with others
Participants are more socially connected
Participants have improved communication skills & self-expression
Participants are more confident & have improved self-esteem
Accountability line
Loneliness is reduced & prevented, people feel more connected
Participants:
• Have improved health and wellbeing
• Take the lead in improving their lives
• Contribute more to their communities
• Improve their employment opportunities (where applicable)
Reduced burden on public services (eg health services)
Communities are more resilient & vibrant, & make their own decisions
Key
Activity
Change mechanism
Outcome
Impact

THEORY OF CHANGE: RELEVANCE NOW



BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: IMPACT

- In small breakout groups

- 10 minutes

In each breakout group:

- How do the previously defined **impacts** relate to the work that you have been doing over the last six months? (see 'stages' below)
- Do the impacts still hold true? Any enhanced/diminished?
- Any new impacts?

- Then we'll feed back to the whole group

Different 'stages':

1.	~March 2020- June 2020:	Intense 'lockdown' /National lockdown
2.	~July – September 2020:	Relaxed 'social- distancing' requirements/ Local measures
3.	~October – Ongoing:	Ramping up/ Targeted or national measures?

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: IMPACTS

NPC

Loneliness is reduced & prevented, people feel more connected

→

Participants:

- Have improved health and wellbeing
- Take the lead in improving their lives
- Contribute more to their communities
- Improve their employment opportunities (where applicable)

→

Reduced burden on public services (e.g. health services)

Communities are more resilient & vibrant, & make their own decisions

Different ‘stages’:

1. ~March 2020- June 2020: Intense ‘lockdown’ /National lockdown
2. ~July – September 2020: Relaxed ‘social- distancing’ requirements/ Local measures
3. ~October – Ongoing: Ramping up/ Targeted or national measures?

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: OUTCOMES

- In small breakout groups

- 10 minutes

In each breakout group:

  - How do the previously defined **outcomes and mechanisms of change** relate to the work that you have been doing over the last six months? (see 'stages' below)
  - Are there any **outcomes and mechanisms of change** that you think are useful/ relevant for digital/ online provision? Any suggestions for ones that would be more useful?

- Then we'll feedback to the whole group

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION: MECHANISMS OF CHANGE + OUTCOMES

Organisations tackling loneliness increase quantity & quality of provision

Mechanisms of change

- Participants trust staff, volunteers & other participants
- Participants feel respected
- Participants feel empowered to create change in their lives
- Participants don't feel judged or punished

Intermediate outcomes

- Participants build trusting relationships with others
- Participants build positive long-term relationships
- Participants are motivated to connect with others
- Participants are more socially connected
- Participants have improved communication skills & self-expression
- Participants are more confident & have improved self-esteem

Different 'stages':

1. ~March 2020- June 2020: Intense 'lockdown' /National lockdown
2. ~July – September 2020: Relaxed 'social- distancing' requirements/ Local measures
3. ~October – Ongoing: Ramping up/ Targeted or national measures?

APPLYING THIS THINKING

- What, if anything, will you take away from today's discussion?
-
- How can you apply this thinking to your work?

- How can it be been useful for your work?

THANK YOU

September 2020

BCF: WRITEUP OF SEPTEMBER COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION (SESSION 6)

NPC held its sixth session of a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for the Building Connections Fund (BCF) on Tuesday 29th September 2020. 10 grant-holders joined the webinar over the course of the session.

The session focused on theories of change and encouraged grant-holders to think about what impacts and outcomes they were targeting through their work, and how this may have changed since March 2020. The session covered:

- Updates from NPC about progress on the BCF evaluation.
- A short presentation from NPC on the history and purpose of the theory of change, and a refresher on the BCF theory of change (see below).
- A breakout discussion on how previously defined **impacts** of their work have changed over the last 6 months.
- A breakout discussion on how previously defined **outcomes and mechanisms** of their work have changed over the last 6 months.

A copy of the slides used can be found here.

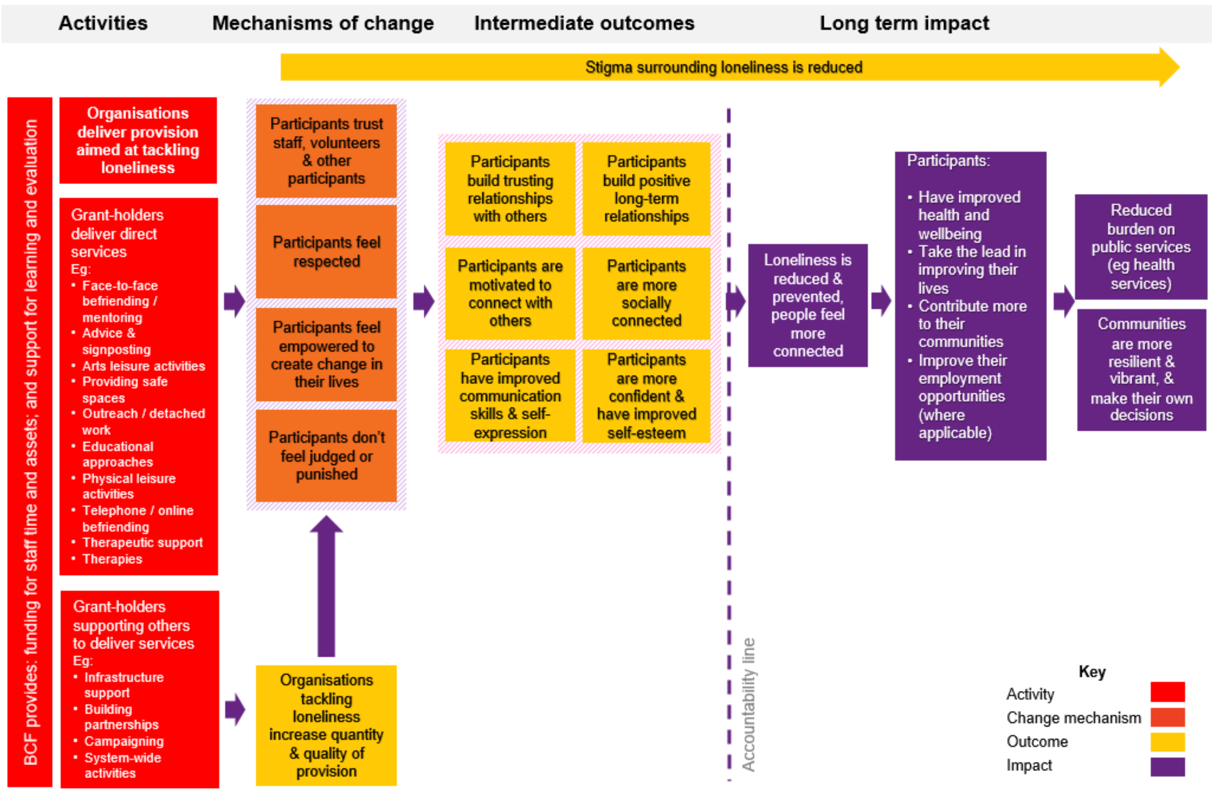


Figure 1: The original Building Connection Fund Theory of Change (pre- Covid-19)

Breakout 1: Impacts

The young people that were engaged originally, I think those were the young people that sadly didn't need the service as much as the young people who weren't as engaged.

Session participant

There's a lot of barriers in place now and I think the loneliness for our ladies has increased quite dramatically. They've kind of gone back to square one.

Session participant

In the first breakout of the session, participants reflected on the impacts shown in the original BCF theory of change (Figure 1), and whether this was still accurate in light of changes to services over the past six months.

In some cases grant-holders felt that **loneliness had increased** among their users, rather than being reduced, due to a number of factors including:

- Difficulties engaging with services due to **digital exclusion,** although one participant had attempted to combat this by moving to a phone system rather than using digital platforms
- Difficulties engaging with services due to **language barriers.**
- Deteriorated **mental health** due to the effects of lockdown.
- **Fear of re-engaging** with services as sessions eased, in some cases due to long-term health conditions, and in others due to anxiety around increasing case numbers.
- The **number of sessions** that services could hold was reduced, in some cases making it harder for users to engage.

However, it was felt that the impact statement '*Communities are more resilient'* had remained relevant, particularly in light of communities in local areas rallying to provide food and medicine deliveries to vulnerable residents.

One participant who worked with unpaid carers suggested that the impact statement '*Loneliness is reduced and prevented, people feel more connected'* still held true, but that **it had simply become much harder to achieve** this impact and that it was more about minimising harm and **maintaining current levels**.

Another participant suggested that although they were still working towards some of these long-term impacts in lockdown, **the methods for achieving these may not be as effective**. The participant gave the example of '*contribute more to their communities*': pre-covid their young people would engage in community activities, and while they had done some remote activities such as letter writing, this was felt to be '*not the best fix*.'

It was noted that **engagement had changed** among user groups – for example, one participant felt that those most in need of their services had stopped engaging during lockdown. These changes to engagement also make it difficult for organisations to know whether they are still achieving their intended impacts.

There were also suggestions that some **new themes and activities had emerged** in the last six months, including:

- Keeping users **safe**, for example checking in on users to make sure their home environments were safe.

- Providing for **practical needs.**
- Providing **'light relief'** and entertainment activities during intense lockdown periods.
- Organisations **connecting** and coordinating with other community groups or community leaders.
- **Maintaining connections** that already existed between users (e.g. users who had connected with each other in previous sessions), or connecting users to other local services (e.g. other peer support groups).
- Providing **consistent and stable services**, which might lead to improved confidence as well as more stable health and wellbeing.
- Readying people to regain a sense of **independence and feel confident reintegrating** into their communities in light of lockdown easing**.**

Breakout 2: Outcomes and Mechanisms

In terms of '*socially connected'*, they're not, because we're having to have 1-2-1 conversations with them… it's limited, really, what we can do.

Session participant

In the second breakout, participants reflected on the outcomes and mechanisms (Figure 1) , and how these had changed over the past six months.

When considering **outcomes**, participants shared the following reflections:

- One participant who ran a women's group highlighted that **achieving intermediate outcomes** had become difficult as their model relied on getting people to physically leave their homes and connect face-to-face, and although they had shifted to a digital service, digital inclusion issues meant many of their users were not engaging as regularly or in the same way.
- It was harder (or impossible) for their users to **socially connect with each other or their communities**. However, one participant noted that although users weren't connected with each other, they were still having conversations with staff, for example through WhatsApp.
- Another participant had been able to connect young people in online group services, as they felt this was essential in supporting young people to have **connections with others and build long term relationships** in the case the service ended.
- One participant reflected that participants having improved **communication skills and self-expression** was still an important outcome for their young people during this time, as well as **building trusting relationships**.
- For a few participants, there is also a new focus on **keeping users safe**, as well as making sure they understood government guidance during the crisis.
- Services have been **adjusted to reflect new needs** of service users. One participant found that at the start of the crisis, outcomes/ impacts were more focused on practical needs whereas this has now moved back to previous outcomes/impacts such as reducing loneliness and increasing social connections.

- Outcomes had become more about **keeping users stable**, and prevent things getting worse rather than trying to dramatically improve their situations.

- There had been some new outcomes emerging, for example **upskilling users digitally** and **improving confidence.**

- It had become **more difficult to collect outcomes data** that organisations usually collected, for example through loneliness measures. Participants were concerned that collecting data around loneliness only illustrated that their service users had felt lonelier because of social distancing restrictions. Equally, taken out of context, the data could suggest that their projects were making people feel lonelier, because they didn't have a control group for comparison.

In terms of **mechanisms**, participants shared the following reflections:

- **Trust and respect** are still important mechanisms, and one participant felt they had built **stronger relationships** with their users than previously.

- Another participant felt that **trust was still key but this had to be built in a different way** online. They mentioned that the young people they work with had experienced a drop in **self-esteem** when connecting online due to feeling self-conscious about being seen on a screen, and so they had to work on this issue in order to build trust and self-esteem among the group.

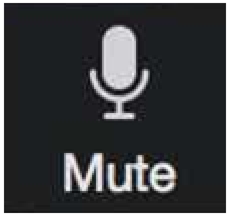
- One participant felt that participants may have felt **judged or punished** during this period in the sense that those without online access were more excluded from activities.

BCF: COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION

Session #7

WELCOME! WE WILL START SOON

Before we begin:



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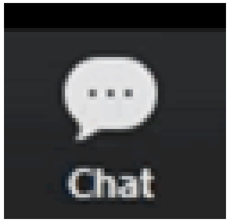

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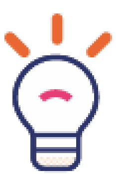
SCHEDULE OF TODAY'S SESSION



- 5 minutes – Introduction
- 10 minutes – More prepared for lockdown?
- 10 minutes – Summary of findings so far
- 10 minutes – Discussion on challenges
- 10 minutes – Discussion on solutions
- 10 minutes – Discussion on user needs
- 5 minutes – close and next steps

UPDATES FROM NPC ON BCF EVALUATION

- **Want to share some great work you've been doing?**
  Email Thomas at thomas.abrams@thinknpc.org

- Resources from previous CLSs in one folder

- **Emerging tips to help your remote project tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing**

- **https://labs.thinknpc.org/category/building-connections-fund/**

GO AROUND THE ROOM

- Name
- Organisation
- Do you feel better prepared for this lockdown than the last one?
- Why?

OUR RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How did Covid-19 change delivery for the Fund's grant holders?
2. What were grant holders doing before the March 2020 lockdown that helped them mitigate against the risks to the delivery of their programmes by Covid-19?
3. What lessons did grant holders learn about changing their delivery model as a result of Covid-19?
4. What were the views and experiences of people that accessed the grant holders' services or projects on:

    How social distancing measures affected them, their feelings of loneliness and the support or services that they needed.

    Accessing services remotely.

    Any changes they experienced as a result of their engagement in the service or project.

5. Did the theory of change that underpinned the interventions to prevent or reduce loneliness still hold if the method of delivery was changed?

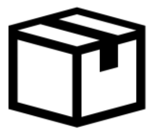
EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q1 – NEW MODELS

NPC

1. How did Covid-19 change delivery for the Fund's grant holders?

New models of delivery to meet new context and needs:

New digital models, e.g. remote classes, telephone befriending, WhatsApp/Facebook groups, quizzes



New non-digital models, e.g. tea in a box, crafts by post, DVD, book and game exchanges

Practical support, e.g. groceries, medicine, phone credit, dog walking

New f-2-f models, e.g. socially distanced walks, garden visits, door knocking, small groups restarting

- Changing over time and blended programmes and activities
- **Stopping or pausing delivery:** certain services closed or postponed

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q1 – APPROACHES TO ADAPTING

1. How did Covid-19 change delivery for the Fund's grant holders?

Approaches and tools used to adapt:

Co-design/participatory approaches, e.g. consultation, needs assessments, user-led support groups

Others doing the opposite and relying on "crisis mode" or top down approaches

Partnership working, e.g. local organisations, authorities/councils, other charities, mutual aid, sharing data and resources

Working at pace, e.g. reaching out to all users, adapting quickly "One project contacted 1,150 members by telephone and had started delivering over 200 support calls weekly to beneficiaries"

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q2 – PRE LOCKDOWN

NPC

Do these ring true? Are we missing something?

2. What were grant holders doing before the March 2020 lockdown that helped them mitigate against the risks to the delivery of their programmes by Covid-19?

Previous strengths in digital skills and infrastructure, e.g. staff already working flexibly or remotely, long running tech advice hub, online groups established, flexible website

Previously blended or remote delivery models, e.g. “We are still delivering our normal services as most were remotely accessed” and “beat boxing and musicians with singing – this work was already in part online.”

Anticipating lockdown – planning and adapting early, e.g. building contingency plans, upskilling staff digitally, sourcing tech equipment

Strong, flexible, supportive organisational culture, e.g. “huge change and challenge initially but with…clear leadership, coordination & regular communication by the manager and having an experienced team who are flexible, everyone has adapted quickly to successfully”

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q3 – CHALLENGES

3. What lessons did grant holders learn about changing their delivery model as a result of Covid-19?

Challenges **Do these ring true? Are we missing something?**

Digital

- **Privacy**, e.g. data sharing and GDPR
- **Safeguarding**, e.g. need to develop new policies
- **Digital inclusion**, e.g. barriers around equipment or attitudes
- **Orgs capacity**, e.g. equipment, not set up to WFH

User

- **User involvement**, e.g. barriers to collecting and sharing ideas
- **Acute needs**, e.g. bereavement, people "slipping through the net", increasing need for crisis support
- **Prejudice**, e.g. intergenerational or ethnic, media narratives

Delivery

- **Fluctuating engagement,** attendance, breadth and depth of interventions
- **Managing volunteers**, too many or too few
- **Staff capacity**, e.g. understaffed, furlough, burnout, wellbeing
- **MEL**, e.g. collection
- **Logistical challenges**, e.g. venues close, new guidelines
- **Collab barriers**, e.g. avoiding duplication

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q3 – CHALLENGES

Let's discuss:

- What's the biggest remaining challenge for the next lockdown?

- What are your organisation's key concerns?

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q3 – SOLUTIONS

3. What lessons did grant holders learn about changing their delivery model as a result of Covid-19?

Solutions and new opportunities **Do these ring true? Are we missing something?**

Digital

- **Upskilling users and staff**, e.g. digital consultants
- **Building organisations capacity**, e.g. tech equipment
- **New opportunities to engage users**, e.g. increased broader reach of digital (time and space)

User

- **Co-design and user involvement**, e.g. increased consultations and understanding of user needs
- **Deeper engagement**, e.g. closer relationships and more open conversations

Delivery

- **Testing new approaches,** assessing feedback and engagement
- **Blending approaches**, bringing offline elements to online delivery
- **MEL informing delivery**, e.g. more user research, more focus on quick feedback data
- **Collaboration**, e.g. working and sharing with new local partners
- **New influx of volunteers**

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q3 – SOLUTIONS

Let's discuss:

- What is the most important thing you have learnt you will take with you into the new lockdown?
- What is the best thing you did to improve staff or users digital skills?
- Are you involving users more or less in delivery?
  - How has that gone?
  - Why?
- Are you still collaborating more or less than before?
  - Who are you collaborating with?
  - Why?

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q4

4. What were the views and experiences of people that accessed the grant holders' services or projects on:

- How social distancing measures affected them, their feelings of loneliness and the support or services that they needed.
- Accessing services remotely.
- Any changes they experienced as a result of their engagement in the service or project.

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q4

4. How social distancing measures affected service users, their feelings of loneliness and the support or services that they needed.

Social distancing measures have affected different people in different ways.

A small number of carers have actually seen their caring situation improve..

The 'lockdown' has exacerbated issues experienced by the LBGTQ+ community - some LGBTQ+ young people, for example, are in isolation with unsupportive families.

Asylum seekers and refugees cannot afford to stockpile food, and they have very little entertainment in houses due to expensive internet and no digital provision. They are already incredibly isolated due to the language barrier and UK culture, so we are trying to supply them with help to reduce isolation.

Do these ring true?

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q4

4. What were the views and experiences of people accessing services remotely.

There were a broad range of views and experiences of people accessing services remotely.

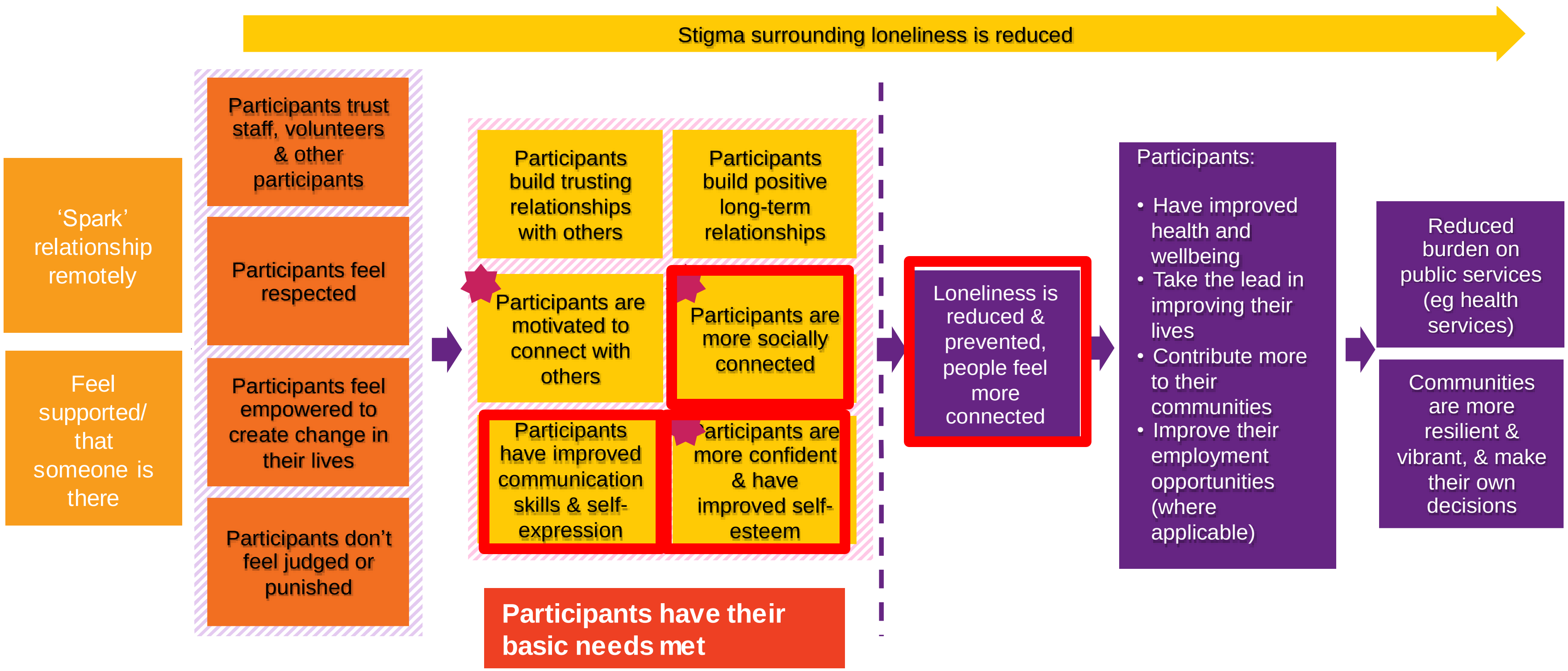
- Generational differences:
  - (In general) younger people found it difficult not to have the f2f meetings; but they 'are still engaged and are managing to access Zoom meetings'.
  - (In general) older people sometimes have less digital experience and/or lack confidence
- However: 'Digital exclusion' – for example lacking access to devices, skills/ confidence/ capability and/or data was a frustration to those that experienced it.

Do these ring true?

How are your users views changing?

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q4

4. What changes did service users experience as a result of their engagement in the service or project.

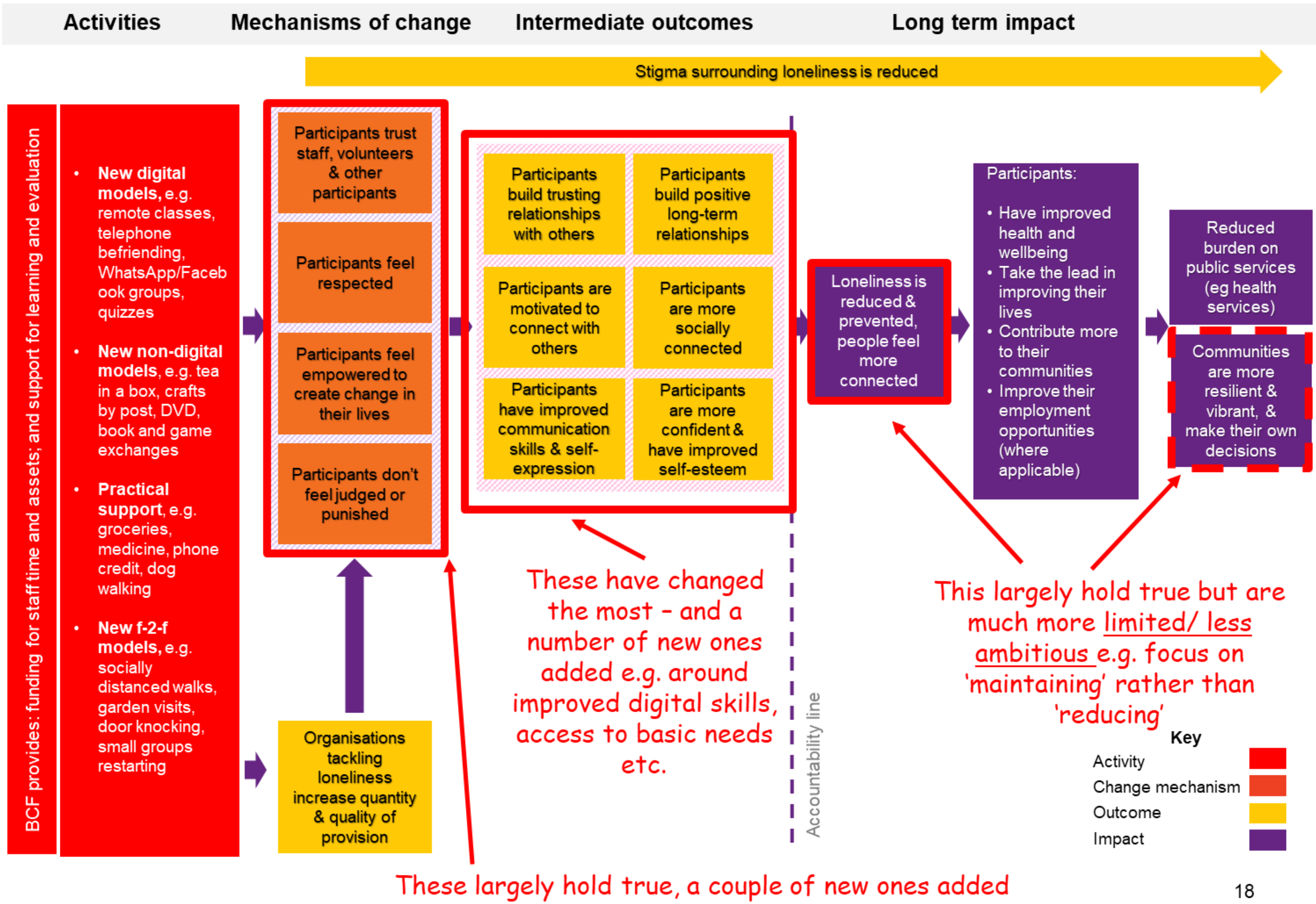


Do these ring true?

What other changes are users reporting?

EMERGING INSIGHTS: Q5

5. Did the theory of change that underpinned the interventions to prevent or reduce loneliness still hold if the method of delivery was changed?



THANK YOU

FINAL REFLECTIONS

- What has the fund done to support or help you since March?
- How could the fund do to better support organisations like you in future?

THANK YOU

September 2020

BCF: WRITEUP OF SEPTEMBER COLLABORATIVE LEARNING SESSION (SESSION 7)

NPC held its seventh session of a series of Collaborative Learning Sessions for the Building Connections Fund (BCF) on Tuesday 3rd November 2020. This was the final session of the research period 16 grant-holders joined the webinar over the course of the session.

The session focused on sharing emerging findings from the research period and gathering reflections from grant holders to test the robustness of the findings. The session covered:

- Updates from NPC about progress on the BCF evaluation.
- A short presentation from NPC outlining the emerging findings from the BCF evaluation, with opportunities for grant holders to reflect on the findings
- A breakout discussion on the challenges faced by grant holders since March 2020.
- A breakout discussion on the lessons grant holders had learnt since March 2020.

A copy of the slides used can be found here.

Breakout 1: Challenges

We've ended up with a really complex hybrid system for people - to meet the complexity of needs, you've got everyone on a slightly different programme and the fear of somebody dropping off and not getting enough support is there all the time

Session participant

NPC shared a summary of the findings on how grant holders had adapted their delivery since March 2020 and the challenges that had emerged through this. In the first break out, grant holders reflected on their biggest remaining challenges as they headed into winter and a new national lockdown.

Broadly grant holders agreed that the research had identified the main challenges. Some that were picked up in more depth in the discussion were:

- Grant holders felt they **had had to work responsively** and were now focussed on '*putting in more formal processes*' and '*thinking about MEL'.* Grant holders felt they had had to embed new processes more quickly and later found issues (e.g. inaccessible data) because they had not planned some elements from the beginning.
- Grant holder reported **user needs intensifying** during this time – for example, addiction and mental health issues – and seeing referrals with much higher needs. In some cases, grant holders did not feel they had the experience to support these users. Grant holders working with people with dementia had seen significant increased cognitive decline.
- One grant holder had found it more challenging to **gather feedback remotely** as it was harder to get service users to engage with questionnaires online.

- Grany holders saw **significant fluctuation in engagement** and felt this '*will be an ongoing problem'*, due to differing and changing user preferences. Grant holders felt they spent more time and resources engaging people during this period.

- One grant holder reflected that though they had tried to involve service users who preferred not to use digital in other ways, they had seen a **drop-off in engagement**: *'You can offer different methods but some of their users were only wanting to engage when it was face-to-face – the models didn't work for everyone'.*

- Other grant holders had seen **increased engagement** with their services online, with service users building connections through this support: '*even though they're not seeing each other they have formed really good friendships'.*

- Grant holders had seen **increased workload** in order to meet the complexity of user needs, and had seen challenges recruiting new users. One grant holder felt they had to continue supporting service users for longer as they had not built up connections as they would have done when working remotely.

- One grant holder reflected that they **lost many volunteers**, particularly older people, as they had to self-isolate.

- Grant holders **struggled with conflicting or unclear guidance** on reopening services in a safe way and spent additional time and resources navigating this.

- Some grant holders reflected on their **internal working practices**. They shared that at points staff had become '*demoralised'* and found remote collaboration took longer than it would have otherwise.

Breakout 2: Lessons learnt

An upside that's come out of the lockdown is that people have learnt new skills, new ways of communicating and supporting each other.

Session participant

In the second breakout, participants reflected on the lessons they had learnt since March 2020 and how these would inform their work into a second lockdown. Lessons shared by grant holders included:

- Grant holders felt it had been important to **respond rapidly**, with one grant holder reflecting: '*we decided to close on the 17th of March and were delivering our first boxes on the 21st. We managed to stop people feeling like they had a big gap'.* They felt this rapid, consistent response was something they'd take forward in a second lockdown.

- For some grant holders, closer engagement had enabled the relationship with service users to be '*less paternalistic'* as the grant holder made fewer assumptions about user needs. Several grant holders felt their service users '*were able to do more than they thought they could do'.* They felt that **building skills and confidence** would build the sustainability of changes for service users.

- **Online support** had been effective for some service users, particularly those facing barriers to travel. Grant holders had used this time to train staff and service users to use digital.

- One grant holder reflected that they had **had to develop new safeguarding policies around digital training**. They found it was '*harder to read body language and pick up on issues like domestic violence'* when working with users remotely via video call.

- Grant holders found there were **different user preferences –** some preferred digital support, while others were keen to move back to face-to-face delivery. Grant holders worked adaptively and adaptively to meet changing user needs.

- Grant holders worked **collaboratively with other local organisations**, who they hadn't worked with previously. For example, one grant holder worked with religious groups to involve service users from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Several grant holders discussed the importance of **user involvement:**

- Some grant holders had involved service users in delivery, using this as an opportunity to build their confidence. One grant holder encouraged service user to become ambassadors, supporting other service users and drawing on their own expertise.

- One grant holder working with carers found that they valued sessions as a space where they '*don't have to make decisions',* so co-production and user involvement was different for this group, focusing more on style of activities or the topics they are interested in covering.

- Grant holders felt it had been important to gather feedback from service users and make use of this when designing services. One grant holder shared that they were keen to replicate this across other services.

- One grant holder had found they were able to engage with a wider group of service users online: *'we have run far more online workshops with groups to design some of our campaigns than we might otherwise have done since March'.*

Overall, grant holders felt **better prepared** for a second lockdown. They had the '*systems in place ready to pick up again'* across a number of delivery models (e.g. phone befriending, delivery of activity packs, practical support with food and prescriptions, etc.) and had begun sharing learning within their organisations. Grant holders also felt that users did not '*seem as frightened as in the first lockdown'* as they had better support structures.