

- Which aspects of our work can be delivered well remotely?
- Who accessed our support and who didn't?

What are we learning about our work through this crisis?

a) We can still make a positive difference to some families through remote delivery

We know that some of our work translated better to remote delivery, such as our online walking groups and yoga groups. Our families survey showed that our service was meeting their requirements and they were benefiting from this. This was encouraging for us. We also learned from this survey that families like wanted more content on our website and social channels, content like activities for children and wellbeing focus work.

However, some families weren't comfortable with this approach and asked to wait until they could receive face to face volunteer support. These numbers were around 5 families and remained on our waiting list.

b) We have improved our evaluation approach overall

We're becoming more aware of different ways to evaluate: what we evaluate and how.

Now we are taking every chance to evaluate. We used to say let's get a survey out but now we're trying to use different ways to gather feedback. For example, at Christmas we did family hampers. It was a chance to meet the families - I asked families how are things going, is there anything we can do differently? Now if someone says something interesting on Facebook we are collecting the comments.

Moving from crisis to recovery - case study

This case study may be of interest to any third sector organisation who is having to adapt and learn as they go in uncertain times.

In 2020 Evaluation Support Scotland (ESS) supported eight projects affected by the COVID-19 crisis to evaluate and learn about their response to the crisis. The aim of this support was to strengthen their response and their recovery, by improving what they do or guiding future plans and strategies. This work was supported by the National Lottery Community Fund.

Homestart West Lothian offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children, throughout West Lothian. During the crisis most of their support has been delivered digitally, with volunteers contacting families on Zoom or over the phone. **Stuart**, Scheme Manager shares his learning.

Why did we get involved in this peer learning programme?

We came on board to access support to help us evaluate our response to the crisis. In particular, we set out to learn:

We use the words used by the families themselves - we don't change it - that makes it more authentic.

We are learning that not everything is a survey!

How is this helpful to our organisation?

We're evolving and learning where we need to go. In terms of next steps: we want to move towards evaluation not being extra work, it's just part of what we do. We plan to do some focus groups with parents to understand how we can better support them and which platforms we should use.

Stuart's tips for others

This gave me the opportunity to build on my evaluation skills. I now put time in my calendar to prioritise evaluation. It used to be first thing to be cancelled but now I know it's about incorporating it into everything I do.

February 2021

Contact details

If you would like ESS's support please contact us at:

info@evaluationsupportscotland.org.uk

You may copy or use this publication in part or whole for non-commercial reasons with the exception of photographs, but you must credit Evaluation Support Scotland.