

Re-starting face-to-face support outdoors

July 2020



Introduction:

This short report is based on the experiences of staff in 5 different Time to Shine projects, all of whom are starting to move towards resuming face-to-face contact with participants.

Making a Match at MAECare has doorstep chats with participants and all staff are provided with essential kit to take from house to house. This kit contains a folding chair, rain poncho, large umbrella, sunscreen, visor, facemask, gloves, hand sanitiser. Making a Match is also restarting Walking Football sessions in an outdoor park. A team consists of 6 players who maintain social distance, the ball is disinfected before and after the game, hand gel is provided and all football bibs are put in a separate bag after the game ready for washing.

The Community Support Project at MHA continues to hand-deliver craft packs but staff are allocating more time to chatting with participants on the doorstep after the delivery. Staff use hand sanitiser and face masks.

The Great Outdoors at TCV Hollybush has walking groups which consist of 2 staff members and 4 participants. Participants all live in the same geographical area and

the walks are local so that participants don't need to use public transport. A comprehensive risk assessment is completed and social distancing is in place during the walks. In the future, participants will be offered 'walk leader' training if they wish to lead walks regularly.

Sage at Yorkshire Mesmac is introducing a buddy system for participants so they can spend time outdoors in pairs or small groups. During lockdown participants opted to use Zoom meetings to learn more about each other. Participants were 'interviewed' by a staff member during Zoom sessions and other participants suggested questions using the chat facility. These deeper connections can be nurtured by using a buddy system. The staff member will consult with all participants individually - to see how they feel about going out and on practicalities such as social distancing and face masks - before taking this further.

Bee Together at Health For All is cautious of re-starting face to face contact in small groups outdoors as people with learning disabilities may not be fully aware of the need for social distancing or regular handwashing. The staff member visits participants for doorstep chats.

Learning from other organisations:

- Singers perform in the grounds of care homes and bring people outdoors to listen. Those who can't go out watch through windows and the singers move around the grounds to reach more people.
- Small groups of participants have a picnic in a park, observing social distance and bringing their own food, drink and rug.
- A pop-up gazebo and chairs are put in public places and participants encouraged to drop in for a chat.
- Street Bingo is facilitated by staff in quiet residential areas.

What are Time to Shine partners learning that can enable the longer-term recovery of our communities?

- Some people are more ready than others to resume face-to-face contact.
- Staff using clear, full face visors (instead of face masks) can aid communication and rapport.
- Projects must continue to work in a person-centred way and provide a mixed offer as lockdown eases, for example: telephone, online, doorstep chats, 1-2-1 outdoor activities and small-group outdoor activities.
- Participants may have lost confidence to leave their homes and will require gentle support and encouragement to re-engage at their own pace.
- Local activities reduce the need for participants to use taxis or public transport.
- Practicalities such as seating and access to public toilets need to be considered when planning outdoor activities away from home.
- Risk assessments need to be carried out before introducing new ways of working.
- Projects need to follow government guidance and clearly communicate the safety measures that have been put in place for outdoor activities AND the expectations on all participants and staff who take part. This enables people to make an informed decision about whether or not to join in.

