



Community Resilience Project

End of Project Update

24 March 2021

The 6-month Community Resilience project received funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF), distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF).

The aim of this project was to build an even more agile and sustainable structure of community resilience response on the Isle of Wight. There were three key elements to this project:

1. Supporting local re-enablement (supporting vulnerable individuals in the community).
2. Helping to deal with the next round(s) of shielding in effective and safe ways.
3. Using the current experience to encourage and support more general community resilience planning (local resilience plans for villages and towns).

Supporting community resilience

Over the past six months, we worked with a network of COVID community hubs, parish and town councils, the Isle of Wight Council, community groups, volunteers and other partners, to help them strengthen their local resilience infrastructure for their communities. Our project linked this network with the formal structure of the statutory Local Resilience Forum (LRF) by attending the meetings of the Community Cell (part of the formal LRF structure).

Despite the limitations imposed by the two lockdowns which were in place during the past 6 months, some **61.8%** of parish and town councils engaged with our project team. Some **11.7 %** of parish and town councils now have drafts of the local resilience plans which were produced with support from our Community Resilience Coordinators. As one of the respondents wrote in the stakeholder survey: “Initially, the production of a resilience plan having been working with the Covid response for a few months was perceived as the least useful. However, having been involved in its completion, I can now see genuine benefit in keeping this up to date for future responses and it has definitely been worthwhile.”

The Clerk of one of the Parish Councils wrote to the Community Resilience Coordinator in their area: “Thank you for the great job you have done and the support you have provided to so much of the Island community – I thought you might like to know that at last night’s Parish Council meeting, the councillors agreed to fill in the last parts of the Resilience Plan – ready for adoption. Your work has made this so much easier and I am very grateful for that.”

During the past six months, we have engaged with over **98** local businesses, **36** schools, **13** community centres and halls, **29** churches and faith groups, and over **73** voluntary sector organisations.

Community hubs and parish and town councils which played the role of community hubs in their areas were provided with the following support throughout this project:

- Updates about local and national developments relating to the pandemic;
- Information helping them to support vulnerable residents in their area;
- Updates about funding opportunities and help in writing funding bids;
- Help with local resilience planning;
- Connecting them with other people, hubs and organisations;
- Access to free online training for staff and volunteers involved in the work of COVID community hubs offered through this project;
- Other support and assistance as and when required.

In November 2020, we also worked with the Isle of Wight Council, community hubs, parish and town councils and other partner organisations and group to help administer funding from the Ministry of Housing & Local Government to provide support to the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) during the period of the second national lockdown.

Stakeholder feedback

As part of our end of project evaluation, we have undertaken a survey of our stakeholders (community hubs, voluntary groups and other organisations engaged with the project). The data collected through this survey shows that:

- **68%** of respondents had contact with the project team between September 2020 often (4 or more times) and **20%** had contact with the project team at least 2-3 times;
- **48%** of respondents found the support offered through this project very beneficial for their community hub/group/organisation and a further **28%** found it moderately beneficial.

Based on their experience, our stakeholders highlighted the following aspects of the project as the most beneficial for them and their communities:

- "Being able to ask a question and knowing that it would be pursued - too often, community groups get fobbed off. The project helped create a two-way dialogue between our concerns / needs and the LRF."
- "Connecting with a wider group of hubs and having the ability to feed news and information or requests for assistance through the communication channels."
- "Information on requests on different matters."
- "Having 24/7 access to people who were supportive and up to date with national and local initiatives."
- "Collaboration with other organisations and additional funding."
- "[Community Resilience Coordinator] is a great worker and draws together the whole community to work well together, just having a local single contact who would follow up and join the dots up has been very useful".
- "The continuous support and updates. It was so helpful to have someone to contact if there was something I was unsure of."
- "Increasing the team's knowledge through the training provided."

Other comments included:

- "I think we sometimes felt quite adrift during first lockdown but when [Project Manager] came into post, we really felt connected."
- "I have been impressed with the management of the project as a whole and particularly the feedback we have received at fortnightly hub meetings. The response to issues and queries has been quick and helpful. Thank you to all involved."
- "The whole team has been a good experience to our hub."
- "Excellent. Quick to respond 24/7. Nothing was too much trouble. Refreshing can-do attitude. Sensitive understanding of local issues."
- "Lots of information and help for the community and residence, well done."
- "Being a part of the hub along with my usual duties would have been a huge task but knowing there was the resilience team on hand and receiving email update from any meetings I could not attend was hugely beneficial."
- "Good updates and joined up working."
- "An excellent scheme. Should continue really."

Training programme delivery

Our training programme was successfully implemented despite the lockdowns as we were able to offer it as live online learning. By engaging local training providers, we were able to negotiate good rates and run all the training events multiple times. Due to a high demand, we were able to arrange additional sessions of Mental Health Aware training and Resilience during challenging times training in March 2021.

All our training events received consistently positive feedback from learners who were able to put their learning into practice straight away.

Training events, numbers of intakes and learners	Examples of feedback from learners
<p>Advice First Aid Volunteer training:</p> <p>4 intakes, 51 learners in total.</p>	<p>“I feel more confident in directing people to get the correct and appropriate support and advice now.”</p> <p>“Myself and K. have been doing a fair bit of signposting already after our training sessions: Discussion about Isle Find It and Isle Help Me came up in our Anxiety Cafe and with participants on my Wellbeing Walk today. The word is getting out there!”</p>
<p>Introduction to Active Listening Skills training:</p> <p>2 intakes, 26 learners in total.</p>	<p>“I found the webinar really helpful, it built on my previous training & also gave helpful suggestions re coping with someone who feels suicidal.”</p> <p>“Very good. The ‘coping with someone feeling suicidal’ session was particularly helpful.”</p> <p>“A good session. I now have a better understanding of their [Samaritans] approach and ways to direct a conversation.”</p>
<p>Mental Health Aware training:</p> <p>3 intakes, 42 learners in total.</p>	<p>“I have often found myself at a loss to help people who are suffering from mental illness. The course provided good insight and practical strategies and definitely raised my awareness. It was very well delivered by an extremely competent and experienced professional who was very personable.”</p> <p>“I feel confident that should I come across anyone wishing to share their issues I am now better equipped to help them.”</p> <p>“This course has widened my understanding all the issues around mental health.”</p> <p>“I will really use the take 10 forward in both my place of work at [...] to help some of our ... workers, as well as my volunteering job for [...], and I’m sure I will use it in my personal life too, especially the way the world is going at the moment. On a personal level, the self-harm section I found most interesting and useful... and now armed with the information and guidance you’ve provided should I ever find myself confronted with a similar situation I feel much more equipped to step in and help talk to them. ... I think this course has been so valuable for me. So thank you for that - you’ve inspired me to encourage the more difficult conversations and not shy away.”</p>
<p>Resilience during challenging times training:</p> <p>5 intakes, 64 learners in total.</p>	<p>“This training has been especially helpful in reiterating the importance of resilience of both us as individuals and our teams, it helped to reinforce good resilience practices during these very demanding times.”</p> <p>“This session was helpful in so many ways; the curve which shows the stages from shock through to new normal was particularly helpful in understanding others' positions, the “breath of life” exercise was a revelation and the simple mindfulness techniques will be invaluable.”</p> <p>“Thank you for this afternoon’s session, I found it very informative - I</p>

	have been coming to terms with my mother's passing at the end of January and not being able to see her before she went. I recognised so many signs in myself today and have a better understanding of why I have feeling the way I have."
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Case studies

As part of the project evaluation, we have also compiled a collection of short case studies which include the following:

- 1. Transportation to vaccination centres** - Since the national vaccination programme roll out began in December 2020, we worked with the Isle of Wight Council, Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other stakeholders to arrange free transportation to the vaccination sites for those who can't afford to get there by taxis and have no other means to travel to access vaccination. One of our Community Resilience Coordinators was instrumental in transforming our Optio voluntary car service to accommodate this need and training local volunteer drivers from different community hubs across the island. The new volunteer drivers were recruited through the CAIW's Volunteer Centre and directly through community hubs.
- 2. Equipment for school children** - In Newport, our Community Resilience Coordinator worked with Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council and a local business to arrange the donation of laptops, chromebooks and notepads suitable for school children; then the refurbishing of this equipment and donating it to schools in Newport for distribution to their pupils in need.
- 3. "Bags of Warmth" initiative** - In the run up to Christmas, our Community Resilience Coordinator and her host organisation Aspire Ryde decided to put together "Bags of Warmth" which would either go out with the Christmas dinners they were delivering, or to people who had been nominated by another partner organisation, group or person. The "Bags of Warmth" included a blanket, hot water bottle, thermal cup with hot drink sachets, plus a hat, scarf and gloves set. Volunteers delivered over a hundred of these bags around their communities. This initiative was supported by a variety of local stakeholders, including the Ryde Town Council, The Footprint Trust, Citizens Advice, Young at Heart group. This initiative was launched by the Mayor of Ryde, The Lord Lieutenant, and the High Sherriff for the Isle of Wight.
- 4. Help for the local project** - In Sandown, our Community Resilience Coordinator worked with the local grass-roots food project which had grown very quickly due to need in the local area. It had moved its base of operations into an empty shop. The project was successful in getting various small pots of money to support. It work and had basic insurance and operational procedures in place, but more work was needed around organisational governance, record keeping, risk management and day to day operational policies. The Community Resilience Coordinator worked with the lead of this project to help them address these issues to ensure good governance, compliance and sustainability of the project.
- 5. Noah's Ark sessions online** – In the Bay area, families previously accessing the Noah's Ark session in person had not been able to access this group since it closed suddenly due to the first lockdown. It was a large and well attended group (40-80 parents and children per week) with attendees including local childminders; foster carers and local parents. Moving to an online session delivery has not been easy due to the group leaders being older and not having the skills to use the necessary technology. Also, some of the families did not have enough devices at home to access the sessions. The Community Resilience Coordinator helped to set up 6 weekly Zoom meetings for families during the January-February half term period and worked with the group leaders to help them access training on Zoom and funding for a Zoom licence.

6. **Help in accessing funding** – in East Cowes, our Community Resilience Coordinator worked with the town council, Mayor, Deputy Mayor and COVID community response hub and other local stakeholders to prepare a successful bid to the Isle of Wight Council's Connect4Communities grant scheme. This funding was used to support local residents/families in real hardship.

7. **Hot Meal collection in West Wight** - Community Resilience Coordinators and their host organisation West Wight Sports and Community Centre worked with other partners to access the Connect4Communities grant and provide weekly hot meals for those in need. In addition to food, volunteers and professionals based at the West Wight hub helped people access other additional support (for example, money advice team at the Citizens Advice).

8. **3Ts IT project to tackle isolation** - Community Resilience Coordinators and their host organisation West Wight Sports and Community Centre worked with Churches Together West Wight, Community Connector West Wight, Hub volunteers, Age UK IW, Independent Arts, Wight Aid and a local donor to purchase ten tablet computers and to deliver a volunteer-led 7-week training programme to teach isolated community members how to use a tablet. Five community members were able to take part in the first programme to increase their skills in this area. One of them stated: "It is the thing that has kept me going through this latest lockdown. I feel much more confident now and it has been lovely to see people on video". All participants have been offered ongoing support to purchase their own device and receive support with that through partnership with Age UK IW. The second course will begin mid-April 2021 and the project is expected to continue to offer rolling courses indefinitely.

On behalf of the project team, I would like to thank all our partners – COVID community hubs, parish and town councils, colleagues from the Isle of Wight Council, volunteers, voluntary and charity sector organisations, churches and faith groups, schools and businesses for their co-operation and support.

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