

Volunteer Cornwall

Volunteer Cornwall reveal what's changed, what's been challenging and what's enabled rapid learning to happen

What happened differently? What is new?

Volunteer Cornwall in common with much of the voluntary sector have always worked in a responsive and flexible way. The organisation has implemented rapid learning and service development in response to COVID-19. At the beginning of March a call for general volunteers was released. But as community and individual needs changed, the call and offer has changed. Volunteers who were unable to leave their home were supported to become virtual befrienders. Very quickly, the need for support for the mental health of volunteers emerged, as conversations with people in need were recognised as sometimes being challenging emotionally. This triggered a call for volunteers with experience of counselling and mental health support. **As a result of this work, mental health support for volunteers and key workers is now being provided.**

What's has surprised or inspired you?

Capacity has shifted between sectors where there is a need. Businesses are offering furloughed staff as volunteers. Identified trades-people are helping with emergencies in people's home. This really is a cross-sector effort. People want to help their communities and those in need.

What was the most challenging thing faced this week?

Some of the real tragedies of suicide, domestic violence and food poverty. Some of it has been really difficult for people to cope with. Many Volunteer Cornwall staff are doing jobs they don't usually do.

What helped this to happen?

- Built on an existing network – Flu-friends
- Daily calls between Voluntary Organisations have been vital to ensuring coordination of effort
- Building on the grassroots community effort – enabling not controlling
- Deployed volunteers into Statutory sector
- Trusted relationship with Statutory Sector (Health and Council)
- Being able to shift and accelerate very quickly. The voluntary sector is used to being responsive and reactive

The biggest achievements so far....

- 3700 volunteers registered in Cornwall.
- 296 community groups registered.
- Directly supported 2500 people with food delivery, prescriptions, household repairs and advice over the phone.



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Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF)

Cornwall VSF reveal what's changed, what's been challenging and what's enabled rapid learning to happen

What happened differently? What is new?

The VSF had just recruited a new CEO and her first day was the first day of lock-down! She immediately pulled together a group of key voluntary sector organisations who were involved in the COVID-19 response and formed a Voluntary Sector Emergency Response Alliance (VERA). The organisations cover a wide range of population groups including domestic violence, older people, young people, mental health, family work, faith groups, food poverty and citizens advice. **As a result of this work, support for people and communities is being coordinated, duplication reduced and individual, community and voluntary sector organizational needs being escalated to statutory sector partners. They are also beginning to plan for the post-COVID recovery and renewal.**

What's has surprised or inspired you?

Voluntary sector organisations have been collaborating much better together around a shared vision. The local authority have removed barriers for the sector to operate more effectively when needs have arisen. The local authority is now looking to build on this grassroots, place-based approach to support recovery and renewal.

What was the most challenging thing faced this week?

Issues with COVID infections and lack of PPE in care homes identified before national government, alongside the need for accommodation for care workers who aren't covered by NHS overnight expenses.

What helped this to happen?

- Shared vision to support individuals and communities
- Daily VERA calls have been vital to ensure coordination of effort
- VSF seen as strategic partner for vol sector by local authority
- Deployed volunteers into Statutory sector
- Being able to shift and accelerate very quickly. The voluntary sector is used to being responsive and reactive

The biggest achievements so far....

- 19 community hubs established chaired by local people or vol sector leads
- PPE equipment, headsets and other vital equipment identified and shared amongst the group
- Service matching empty holiday properties with care workers established



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SNUG

SNUG ((Supporting Neonatal Users & Graduates) reveal what's changed, what's been challenging and what's enabled rapid learning to happen

What happened differently? What's new?

SNUG have tailored their current system to help and benefit the needs of the families. They are producing documents with all the relevant and up to date information. Created a 'Prep for home publication for COVID-19' which includes, information on how the health visiting service has changed, how the consultant service has changed and what families can expect. The team have become virtual supporters, working closely with hospitals and their local maternity system throughout the process to help prepare the vulnerable families with vulnerable babies, with what they can expect from provisions from the local community. Through partnership they have been able to work together rapidly and collaboratively making sure people are going home in the know, and with good knowledge of all their local services, which is helping to reduce stress and local anxiety. As a result of this their referral level has not dropped and they have managed to retain the same number of referrals without a face-to-face presence.

The favourite initiative so far

Historically parents come and visit their babies together. However, due to COVID-19 only 1 parent is allowed to visit their baby at one time. Meaning Mum and Dad take it in turns, they might do this for a 24 hour period. To help ease discomfort and added stress SNUG have created 'Nap packs' for parents. The nap pack includes a pillow, drink, eye mask, toothbrush, a pot noodle as cafes are closed in the hospital.

What was the most challenging thing faced so far?

As a team, working a lot of hours to figure out new systems and new ways of working together. It has been hard not being able to see colleagues.

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What enabled this to happen?

- Support from the hospital, the local maternity system and the voluntary sector
- Continued support from staff working extra hours to meet the demand
- New volunteers wanting to help families in need
- NHS supporting the service
- Combining all systems onto one integrated platform
- Relationships, being open and becoming more united

"You want families to feel like they've got care wrapped around them. After they've gone through the experience of nearly losing their child you want them to feel as much support as if they were receiving it face to face" - SNUG



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One Ilfracombe

One Ilfracombe reveal what's changed, what's been challenging and what's enabled rapid learning to happen

What happened differently? What's new?

[One Ilfracombe](#) has been co-ordinating volunteers for over five years. Back in March they reacted early to the community-level challenge of COVID-19 recognising the need to coordinate the huge wave of community volunteers and street-level action. Building on their existing strengths they have structured delivery of volunteer support through a cascaded system and built a clear workplan to guide this approach. They recruited DBS-checked Area Coordinators and supported them with video advice, protocols, flyers and social media communication mechanisms. They then recruited volunteers to each of these Areas, providing on-the-ground support through a network of people who are working within their own area, providing support to those who have no access to friends and family. This has meant that assistance from One Ilfracombe can exist effectively alongside informal networks and structures. At the same time, they continued to work closely across the system, coordinating with council, police and health to re-deploy services where needed.

What surprised you?

The workplan became an incredibly helpful tool. Different towns have subsequently used the workplan in different ways depending on the existing assets and infrastructure in their towns.

What was the most challenging thing? There were a lot of questions to answer at the start, including on social media, and a lot of hours put in by the main team. However, as the workplan was developed in more depth, systems were put in place to reduce the volume of inquiries.

What helped this to happen?

- Delegating co-ordination from central team to Area Coordinators
- Strong, existing cross-system relationships
- Mobilising existing resources
- Clear protocol and procedures
- Use of social media
- Be patient: 'Fast not perfect!'

"Being able to react so quickly and effectively to ensure that the most vulnerable in the community were able to isolate."



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St Austell Healthcare

St Austell Healthcare reveal what's changed, what's been challenging and what's enabled rapid learning to happen

What happened differently? What's new?

When COVID-19 hit, the social prescribing team recognised the need to shift focus, quickly. Along with considering the wellbeing of their colleagues, they split their social prescribing and community connecting activities into two streams: technology and direct people support. The team had been developing an app as part of their community building work, and they very rapidly re-focused this to incorporate relevant information to COVID-19, including mental health services, online services, food delivery. The app has been well received by the community as well as staff, who refer to it to identify support for those who don't have access to the app itself. Constant updates to this app are taking place as new services are being identified within the area. The second stream of work focused on rationalising the lists of vulnerable people and setting up a system to call them frequently, linking them to community resources and ensuring their mental and physical wellbeing is cared for.

What's has surprised or inspired you?

Community resilience and support is astonishing. Also the extent to which organisations have worked together. In terms of impact, some of the younger generation are taking more of the strain emotionally and financially.

What was the most challenging thing faced so far

Supporting pharmacies to get prescriptions to patients has been a challenge as each pharmacy works in a slightly different way and uses different systems for repeat prescriptions, deliveries and getting things signed off. Work is underway, with each pharmacy helping to streamline their processes.

What helped this to happen?

- Willing partners: within the practice, Primary Care Network and wider voluntary and community sector
- Community resilience - the amount of people wanting to help
- A proactive GP surgery
- Local links into the community helping to meet the demand
- Clinical links enabling patients to be given the right medical advice
- Dedicated phonenumber so patients can make contact at any time

"It really is about the people. When you're unable to have that personal contact with people, it's so important they know that there is someone on the other end of the phone."



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