



Good Things
Foundation

Managing Coronavirus as an Online Centre

Chat panel summary and key
learnings



Managing coronavirus as an online centre

Following the webinar on 20th March with 100+ Centres, the following summarises the discussion and seeks to identify some clear discussion points for Good Things Foundation might support Online Centres most effectively during this time.



“...delivery as we know it has shut down...”



Online Centres' immediate response (as at 20/03/20)

Immediate responses varied among the Network;

- Centres physically closed & staff homeworking
- Centres physically closed & no staff homeworking - some digital projects suspended entirely
- Centres physically open - skeleton staff, distancing & hygiene
- Centres physically closed - homeworking

It was not known how this situation might alter over the coming weeks, but Online Centres were largely expecting to physically close.

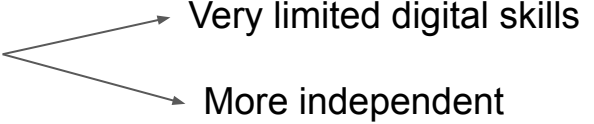
Who are our Centres' customers?

Centres described the people they are trying to help/reach as those who are/have;

- Limited digital skills
- Limited digital skills AND language barriers
- No digital access at home
- Learning disabilities
- Vulnerable adults (e.g. elderly)
- Socially isolated
- Carers (e.g. of children that are no longer in school, but at home)

Context

Online Centres identified customers being on two broad digital learning journeys:

Who?	Those needing to START their learning	Those needing to CONTINUE their learning
Needs	NEW learners	EXISTING learners 
Challenges	Finding them/ reaching out	Reaching out/ making contact

What are Centres doing already?

How are Centres trying to reach out to their existing customers?

- Helping them online
- Holding online 'check ins'
- Supporting them remotely
- Providing telephone support
- Webinars
- Remote *technical* support
- Texting
- Emailing
- Writing (paper!) to people

- Making immediate contact with those customers that they can.
- Regularly keeping in touch

They also told us that Networks & communities were working together to reach vulnerable people (pooling resources), and they had had lots of offers of support.

Software

In the course of the webinar, Centres described using different software, and platforms, to reach customers, and to enable staff to continue to work remotely:

- Google Drive
- Google hangouts
- Online videos
- Video conferencing
- Facetime
- Facebook [watch parties]
- Whatsapp
- Microsoft teams
- Adobe connect
- Skype chat groups
- Zoom
- Google classroom
- Dropbox
- Office 365

Learner needs

Centre staff provided insight into priorities for Learners, and suggestions of things that might help support them:

- Support pages for learners on LMW website
- Accessing Universal credit journals for job searching is a concern - will benefits stop if they don't access it
- Can't access online for job searching
- Information about food banks
- Kit & equipment such as mobile phones, tablets
- Schedule of events/ activities - routine in time of anxiety
- Getting online whilst coping with distractions, such as now caring for children at home
- Keeping in touch - conversation, helping reduce social isolation
- How to access learning accounts from home
- How to register for LMW from home
- How to do video calling
- Coping strategies & light relief
- Finding online community groups

Digital content

Centre staff provided insight into priorities content that might help support them:

- Financial support (businesses)
- Financial support (individual)
- Health information (how to access)
- Health information (signposting)
- Useful links
- App to practice language skills
- Software tutorials (e.g. Microsoft Team/ Zoom)
- Scripts for supporting customers on the phone - step by step guides to work through
- Webinar for learners about accessing the NHS at this time
- Printable remote learning guides
- Digital resilience (NHS)
- Video calling instructions

Challenges...how might we at Good Things Foundation...?

Key themes -

- Make sure that people - *anyone, not just those associated directly with Network partners* - can support excluded people without face to face, or digital (e.g. over the phone, through a window...)
- Understand best practice in these circumstances regarding
 - Communication (reaching out, webinars)
 - Support (coaching people through digital / social exclusion with new barriers)

N.B concentrating on FREE and widely available solutions. We will note other things that are in the marketplace they may already be using

- Ensure that any provision of hardware and infrastructure (e.g. phones, tablets etc.) to excluded people are connected and usable (consider the whole journey)

Challenges...how might we at Good Things Foundation...?

Individual challenges (in no particular order) -

Skills

- ...support Centre staff to develop their own IT skills/ knowledge specifically to help their learners?
- ...support Centre staff to move all delivery online?
- ...provide Centre staff with technical IT support?
- ...develop/ signpost to guides 'how to'

Software/platforms/ technical

- ...enable access to broadband/ internet access?
- ...provide kit and equipment to users (Centre staff AND learners)? [remembering that providing kit to those who do not already have it, brings a separate set of challenges - providing kit to people who do not know what to do with it]

Community

- ...support Centre staff to reach those not online or digitally connected (without equipment etc.)
- ...connect Centre staff (with each other, and GTF) to feel they are not alone and are connected?
- ...support Centre staff to engage with potential learners (digitally and potentially socially isolated)?
- ...guide Centre staff in appropriate software and digital platforms for their needs?

Next steps

Thank you for taking part in the webinar last week, it was great that so many of you could join us to talk about how the current situation is having an impact on the way you normally work.

Over the coming weeks we'll be combining the insight you shared via the chat panel along with what we've learned from speaking with Online Centres over the last week to provide thorough support and guidance.

To help us do this our Service Design, Research and Network teams may reach out to some of you on an individual basis. We hope you don't mind.



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