

## Third Sector Case Study: Orkney Blide Trust



### Description of revision to routine service delivery made in response to covid-19/lockdown

All face to face services were suspended at the start of lockdown. In their place Orkney Blide Trust moved to providing outreach calls to our membership, to offer support remotely but still being there to listen to people's issues and offer guidance or onward referral where appropriate. 3 support workers are delivering outreach calls to 124 people.

Our social enterprises, Café @ no. 65 Victoria Street and our outside catering service were also suspended.

Six employees were placed on the Job Retention Scheme (furlough).

Time to Talk Counselling also moved to remote sessions. Online video calls were offered but this was declined by clients in favour of telephone sessions or waiting for face to face appointments to resume.

Referrals to other organisations for specialised support have continued.

### Description of additional activities introduced during lockdown

Zoom video meetings has proved very successful and allowed us to deliver Creative Writing and mindfulness sessions to the people of Orkney, not just our members.

Our Business Development Graduate was tasked with maintaining our social media to inform our members and the wider public about things that were happening locally and nationally, in terms of the pandemic. This included information on sources of support, keep safe messages and self-help (e.g. yoga for stress).

In anticipation of the increased demand for counselling post-lockdown Orkney Blide Trust contracted a second counsellor who will start delivering sessions in September 2020, when face to face sessions will re-commence. This has reduced the waiting list significantly.

A member suggested we create an online chatroom so members could keep in touch, which was done. However, the chatroom never really took off with the membership but another suggestion from a member to make use of Zoom has proved more successful. This is a 'tea & chat' meeting set up by a staff member but run by the members themselves. 8 have taken place so far attracting an average of 6 people.

Orkney Blide Trust was fortunate to be able to access Community Wellbeing Funds to help support our members who were struggling financially. 26 people received awards to help them meet the increased costs of food, electricity and telephone calls.

Our garden has always proved popular and to help maintain it, one of our trustees started working with volunteers. This provided some ecotherapy for the 5 people who took part.

Successful application to Connecting Scotland to issue an iPad and mobile Wi Fi to one member who fitted the criteria.

In August 2020, Café @ No. 65 Victoria Street re-opened as a takeaway, which has allowed us to return 3 employees to work through flexible furlough.

### **What you learned from the changes and what you might continue or develop as a result**

Orkney Blide Trust will continue to provide Zoom online access to some of our activities, this will allow more people from remote or rural areas of Orkney to take part without having to travel to Kirkwall. We may consider keeping the member's 'tea & chat' meetings going but this will depend on how many people want them to continue.

We will have to develop a new way of working with our members if the Covid-19 guidelines remain in force. Before Covid the people we support would undertake tasks within the organisation e.g. reception duties or admin, as part of their recovery (building confidence, being able to achieve etc). However, with restrictions in place this isn't feasible so we will have to develop new ways of providing support but as yet have had no time to think about this.

### **Service User feedback**

'Thank you for doing this. It has already made me feel better and I am sure others will be pleased I have taken steps to deal with it.';

'Thank you this it will enhance my life';

'Thank you so for awarding me some funds from The Blide's pot. It is so appreciated.';

'Thank you so much for the award. 😊';

"What a great help. I used it to pay Hydro arrears and stocked up on food. Thank you."

"Thank you for the iPad, now I can take part in the online sessions"