

Summary of NSPA discussion: The future post-Covid – what have we learned? 22nd July 2021

| Positive changes | Challenges |
|---|---|
| <p>Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some teams who were geographically separated have been brought closer together as easier to regularly meet and connect online - Easier to remotely attend training, webinars and conferences, so people have shared and gained more knowledge - Staff have been resilient and adaptable, willing to learn new technology and skills to connect and work together online - Working from home suits many, with more flexibility and no commute - Many are talking about a hybrid model of working, with meetings in the office but most days working from home - Some organisations work to 50-minute meetings, and protected lunch breaks, in order to ensure staff get breaks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individuals need connection and we are all missing the incidental conversations and interactions that happen around meetings and being in the office - Lots of online meetings has caused online fatigue, people need to take regular screen breaks - Hybrid model of working may be difficult if some are in the office and others working from home – how to ensure parity and inclusion? We may need to reassess as we move on. - Staff returning to face to face support are needing more time between sessions as reading all the non-verbal cues as well as everything else can lead to staff feeling overloaded - Being resilient for 18 months or more is taking its toll |
| <p>Service delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Many organisations adapted very quickly, developing new offers and options, and expanding provision - Organisations will continue to offer a choice for online or in person, giving people the ability to choose what is best for them - Services have been able to reach more people online - Communications from public health to other services improved, to ensure as many as possible were receiving key updates about well-being and mental health | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of face to face interactions and home visits means service providers can miss out on vital cues as to how people are – body language, cues from people’s surroundings - Digital only means can’t easily chat with family of service users which can help provide subtle insights - Safeguarding issues – are people safe online at home – is there privacy, both from family members and from home technology that could hear conversations – important for staff and service users - Outreach work just re-starting, but feels safer if outside – need to risk assess different venues if holding stands at conferences or events |

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| <p>Service users</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is still lots of anxiety around opening up, so good to offer online option - Online preferred by many people - The importance of community and connection has been highlighted and its value recognised. It is really important to feel part of something, and this will continue to be explored | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Some people have struggled to get face to face appointments – either for physical or mental health - and have faced lots of delays, which has further affected their mental health - Lack of technology means some people had difficulty accessing support online and have had to wait for face to face - Lack of usual support structures, including community spaces and groups, have been a big loss, and many have not re-started |
| <p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More registrations and fewer cancellations than in-person - Easier for people who don't drive, live in rural locations or have accessibility difficulties - Cheaper to attend online training/conferences as no travel or accommodation costs etc - Despite concerns, online delivery has been effective and felt safe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to take care with sensitive subjects like self-harm, suicide prevention and bereavement - Ensuring the well-being of participants, and having systems to check-in or follow up if people leave a session unexpectedly - Online only can mean miss the ad hoc conversations that can highlight where people are missing something or raise useful questions - Moving it all online will continue to exclude those without access to the technology needed |
| <p>Collaborations/partnerships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online meetings are easier to attend, can be briefer, run to time and include people from across the country - Desire to ensure people's mental health and well-being were prioritised led to greater collaboration between local services, e.g., local government, voluntary agencies, local fire services | |
| <p>Organisational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set up of online services/provision and change had to be done quickly, the emergency element forced action and change and cut red tape and processes - Opportunities to transform services based on what was learned about demand, staffing, need and delivery options - Large organisations re-thinking use of their space: to ensure private spaces for confidential conversations – in person or online/phone; to offer space to other organisations if fewer staff in office - One council set up a 'mental health and well-being cell' for anyone working on that issue, it is still meeting monthly, as the need is still there | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Need to balance the needs and preferences of individual workers, and organisational or economic demands when thinking about return to offices - When commissioning services, often these are done on an annual basis, but takes so much time to then re-apply, so working towards longer ding period |

