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Tell me what you do.

I am service team leader for a childrens charity, we have the contract to run a Young Carers Project for two local authorities in North Wales.

How has it been for you during Covid-19, are you working from home?

Yes I am, we are able to go into the office on a rota system because it is only a small office. You know, we are only a small team so we can only have a certain amount of people in the office at any one time. So apart from nipping in and out I've mainly been working from home since March.

How have you found it? Do you have children?

I do yes, one daughter who is 12 and one who is 7. I'm used to working from home because I did it one day a week anyway, but its very different when your children are around. Its been more challenging for sure.

Definitely, for me, I've moved house towards the end of lockdown, that was really challenging not having the help with the move.

I can imagine! Our organisation are really good at keeping up to date with technology, the modern way of working. Its worked to our advantage because we were already doing video calls and we were quite tech savvy, although we did still offer the face to face meetings. So it kind of forced us to go a different way, but we were okay with it and we were able to adapt quite quickly you know?

So what kind of things have you started doing?

So the things that we have changed since lockdown is we now do Young Carers Assessments by video calls or telephone calls, we are not visiting the homes to do those.

We do 1-1 emotional support sessions, again, video calls or telephone calls.

Telephone keep in touch with all our young carers. But since the lockdown restrictions have eased we have been able to physically meet with some young carers. So those young carers who are really struggling, the 'high end' young carers, we've actually started meeting those. Like walking and talking therapeutic sessions, all done socially distanced, we are not transporting anybody. We will meet them at their home and we will go for walks with them. These are the ones that really need to get out of the house and need that face to face contact. We've done a few of those, even before the lockdown came to an end really, and we were able to do that social distanced.

The groups, we usually run young carers groups on a monthly basis, different groups across both counties. We are not able to do face to face groups, but we've done digital groups. Its...I'm not saying hit and miss...but the attendance of the digital groups varies. Some young carers have told us 'no it's not for me' I don't like that way of you know, and these are young carers that would come to the groups regularly they've said 'no, the digital group isn't for me, I'll ring you if I need anything, I'll leave that'. Some young carers have really really benefited and have attended the digital groups constantly. So what you can do digitally is not the same as what you can do with the face to face groups, but that support for them is there, the opportunity to meet other young carers is there, giving them a break from everything else and you know, giving them some 'me' time. So like I say the attendance for the digital groups varies, its just depends what people have on. You know

yourself its quite difficult to remember sometimes when things were online you know. But...so, we offer them and we have children coming to them.

So, I'm just trying to remember what else we do, all meetings we do now with young carers are digital, any consultation is digital, I'm trying to think what else. We did have a Facebook Page anyway so we are constantly sharing information to families via our Facebook page.

Our charity have a parenting support section on the our website and we've made links, because one of things that has come out of this for us, is that where we support the young carers, the whole family has really struggled and found it difficult to cope. So we are not just supporting the young carers, we are supporting the whole family.

One thing that has been really good is that by saving time on transport, you know the time it would normally take to get to and from places because all the meetings and everything are online. We've been able to keep in touch with our families, some families have had more contact from us, than they did before because of the new way of working. And because of that we've really got to know our families, we've got to know exactly what's going on for some of them you know. Whereas some families you thought were okay, well I think families have opened up a lot more.

Before we would ring, of course, when we do the initial assessment, we would meet the family (prior to lockdown this was) and we would get to know the parents, but from then on it would literally just be the arrangements done with the parents, we wouldn't really be supporting the parents. If anything came up, of course we would signpost the parents and refer for further advice. We've really been more involved with the whole family over the lockdown, and its made a real difference to

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everyone. You know if you have someone who is at home, unwell with an illness or a disability of affects everyone in the family and we've really seen that over the lockdown.