

your own place

GOING DIGITAL OR GOING BUST



#NotWithoutMe

A summary of the 'Our Digital Journey' blog series exploring the development of online services during Covid-19

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GOING DIGITAL - QUESTIONS WE WISHED WE'D HAD MORE TIME TO ASK OURSELVES

1. What technology expertise, skills & experience do we need to do this and have already?

2. How can we continue to make interventions engaging online?

3. What is core to us and our delivery that we don't want to lose?

4. How will we know if it works?

5. What's it going to cost and who will pay?

6. How can we keep people safe?

OUR DIGITAL PROJECT TOP TIPS

RESILIENCE

We learnt...

The resilience of your organisation, team and those you support cannot be separated

TIP 1

Create a culture where you can be honest about the shortcomings of the organisation, the support people need, the skills you need to bring in and design and cost it as one

COLLABORATION & PARTNERSHIP

We learnt...

This much digital development as well as demands on new skillsets puts huge pressure on the team at a time of external pressure we may not always be aware of

TIP 2

Involve the team in as much of the planning and strategy as possible, bring in outside expertise if needed and think about what skills you need to recruit for in the future including your governance

DIGITAL EXCLUSION & SAFETY

We learnt...

The world is digital by default. We have a moral responsibility to keep people safe in all we do, including if we are asking them to go online more

TIP 3

Ascertain the risks and resiliences by asking questions as part of ALL delivery and not just explicitly digital delivery. Take safe risks now in trying ideas out and keep learning logs to understand what works

YOUR OWN PLACE

Your Own Place is a social enterprise that exists to prevent homelessness.

Incorporated in 2013, for seven years we have been delivering Tenancy & Independent Living Skills Plus (TILS+) training, Employment and Mentoring Support to people of all ages to prevent homelessness.

Our values are everything. We work with a diverse range of people who face considerable barriers to achieving their chosen life goals - most of these barriers are not of their own making, but part of many systems and policies that simply don't work for everyone.

In a year of unprecedented challenges, as with many other organisations and businesses, we were compelled sooner and more quickly than anticipated, to deliver our offer virtually. We were most passionate about retaining our values when online - including our sense of fun, engagement and innovation.

Alongside this we were conscious not just of the cost and pressures of all this on our people, but our duty to keep people safe too. All of this, was at times, utterly overwhelming.

This report covers a series of blogs commissioned by Carnegie UK Trust. to reflect, explore and share our experiences of moving online with our delivery.

They have felt quite personal and afforded me not just the opportunity to recognise our collaborative achievements, but our areas for improvement too.

Even as the blogs were being written in the autumn of 2020, the landscape and lockdowns have been evolving and still are.

I'm proud of the blogs, but most of all I'm proud of our approaches and that they remain true to our values. When nothing else is the same, these at least remain our constant and their constancy has been echoed by those we support.

Having worked closely with Carnegie UK Trust in 2018 and 2019 we have developed a relationship of trust, respect and equity and I was delighted and humbled when they asked me to reflect on our digital learning through a series of blogs and vlogs.

The purpose of this document is to bring together all the blogs and vlogs, share them in one place and provide an overview of our tips and considerations.

Thank you for reading!

Rebecca White

CEO Your Own Place

THE FIVE BLOG & VLOG LINKS

Blog & Vlog 1

**Going digital or
going bust**

Blog & Vlog 3

**Keeping everyone
safe when you
move online**

Blog & Vlog 5

**Will we return to
face to face
delivery?**

Blog & Vlog 2

**The impact of
going digital on
your team**

Blog & Vlog 4

**If we go digital will
we still achieve our
mission?**

1. SUMMARY

- Being a cloud based organisation making good use of tech we started from a good baseline for digital delivery.
- With so much uncertainty reigning during the first lockdown, scoping the opportunity and making decisions posed big challenges for us all.
- Against this backdrop we designed new online versions of all our services as well launching entirely new and commercial services.
- Meanwhile we supported people in any way we could virtually, whilst recognising the toll all this took on our little team.

2. LEARNING

- The Mission: the importance of staying on mission.
- Pragmatism: we are still able to reach people, whilst being pragmatic that some of the solutions were neither perfect nor enduring.
- Collaboration: most of all we discovered that finding the solutions as a team was more effective as we went on the learning journey together and supported each other.



BLOG & VLOG 2

1. SUMMARY

- It's impossible to overstate the impact of the digital change on the team.
- With shrinking resource and growing need, utilising good systems (online as well as offline) across the organisation was very important.
- Good systems provided a springboard to develop new ones together as a team.
- Our environment of high support and high challenge enabled the team's fast learning and their adaptability to be celebrated.

2. LEARNING

- **Cost:** changes to service have a cost. From the platforms, maintaining them and the staff time. Understanding this is important.
- **HR:** this move online introduces considerations in terms of recruitment and the skills mix in the team including in governance.
- **Digital resilience in parallel:** the digital resilience of the team goes hand in hand with understanding the digital resilience of those we support.



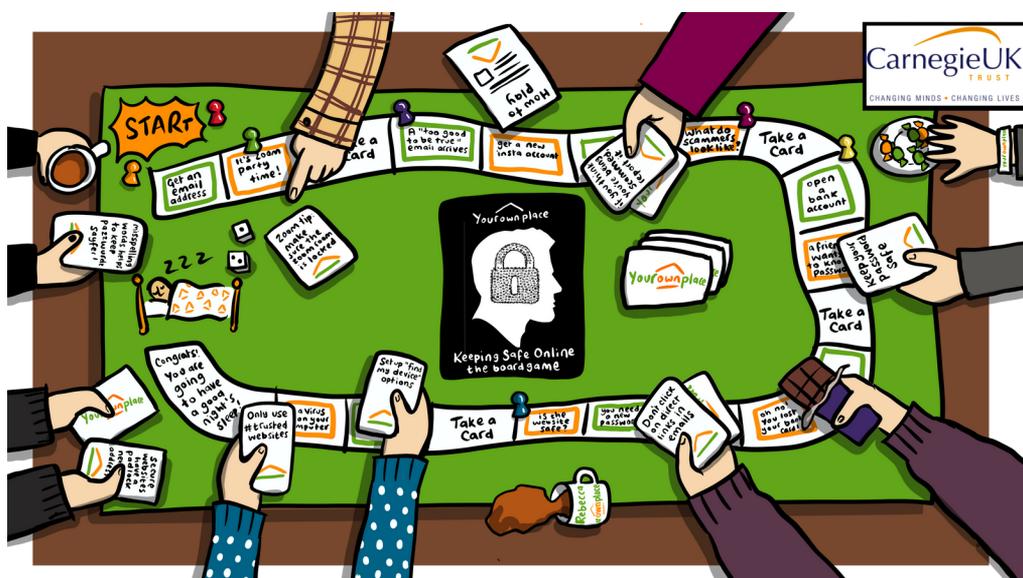
BLOG & VLOG 3

1. SUMMARY

- One of the biggest challenges in a virtual world that many of us don't understand in our own lives is how we keep people safe.
- Ignoring the virtual world is not an option when those we support are immersed in it.
- With so many untapped opportunities as well as a lack of support for the sector in going digital, we are balancing risk, mission and accessibility - and putting our own organisations at risk.

2. LEARNING

- Values: values are everything. Honest, open and blame-free organisations are safer organisations allowing for challenge and transparency to learn from mistakes.
- Being OK with not knowing: encouraging an openness to admit what we don't know as well as being and learning together supports us all to stay safe.
- Listening: it was important to ask people about their digital resilience and take small actions to keep people safe.
- HR: we're now considering carefully the skills the team needs in a digital future.



BLOG & VLOG 4

1. SUMMARY

- With so much change to not just our style of delivery, but lack of face to face contact and different ways to collect data, it seems very likely that our outcomes will change too.
- If our mission is to prevent homelessness, in 2021 we must return to our core outcomes to achieve this mission.
- Focusing on our core outcomes and measuring them is vital to proving how we still prevent homelessness even if we're delivering interventions virtually.

2. LEARNING

- Online replication: by understanding what's core and not core to achieving our outcomes, we can conclude what can and can't be replicated online.
- Comparing data: with bigger datasets on our digital delivery we will know the impact on our outcomes from going online with delivery.
- Commissioners: early honest conversations with commissioners about these changes as well as cost implications seem likely to lead to a hybrid model in 2021.



BLOG & VLOG 5

1. SUMMARY

- We will be returning to face to face delivery by preference, because face to face as with digital is just a tool - one works for some and one for others.
- A working from home hybrid is good for people and the planet.
- We're in the business of building relationships with those facing most barriers, so it's incumbent on us to go the extra mile.
- For many, we are the only contact they get.

2. LEARNING

- **Just a tool:** digital, for some is a viable alternative and reaches some people that face to face does not.
- **Cost:** it's not cheaper when all the re-design work, systems and tasks to overcome digital exclusion are considered.
- **Human contact:** humans need (and deserve) human contact and it's the soft outcomes that make the magic happen.



Values

OUR VALUES

EQUALITY

ASSET BASED

RESTORATIVE

HIGH QUALITY

INNOVATIVE, ENERGETIC AND FUN

Our thanks to the
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