

Booth Centre

The impact of COVID on our centre and its context.

▶ **Flexible working and accessibility to services by use of digital technology:**

- ▶ During the pandemic we relied heavily on digital technology to maintain communication between the people we would usually see on a daily basis and services. We have maintained this in 3 key areas:
- ▶ Into work support - finding and applying for jobs
- ▶ Online skills sessions
- ▶ Individuals searching for housing independently

▶ **Activities:**

- ▶ During the pandemic we produced online activities accessible on YouTube and activity packs which we sent out to a variety of accommodation providers.
- ▶ a. We have continued to produce activity packs for people due to how much positive feedback we had.
- ▶ b. We have not continued with our virtual activities as we have now we able to fully reopen our activities programme.

▶ **Contact/Phone Support:**

- ▶ During the pandemic we set up a phone support service, where we kept weekly contact with a group of people who opted in to the service. This enabled us to support people over the phone with a variety of topics, including health support or benefits/accommodation support.
 - ▶ We have not continued this service as we have now fully reopened, we are able to see people regularly.
 - ▶ Reopening gradually has allowed us to recalibrate and we have made changes to policies and methodology within the environment, in conjunction with people reaccessing the service.

▶ Affordable Housing:

- ▶ Everyone In showed services how everyone can be accommodated. During that time though - access to Private Rented Sector accommodation continued to be difficult. Moving people from the emergency provision into longer-term housing was a clear issue as the scheme came to an end. We have a dedicated resettlement worker who continues to support some of the people who were found PRS housing.
- ▶ PRS homes are very expensive in Manchester due to the gentrification of the city and surrounding areas. Properties are snapped up by developers and are at very high rates of rent. People are having to accept accommodation much further afield, which has impacted on them accessing their support networks.



▶ **Partnership Working:**

- ▶ The pandemic showed us how by working in partnership with local services, the local authority and other third sector organisations, we were able to offer a more complete package of support to people. The pandemic forced all sides to work together and much of this joint working has continued and is successful.