

## Interest Link Borders: June 2021 End-of-Lockdown Evaluation

We carried out an in-depth survey and consultation in September 2020, which helped refine the distance service. The June 2021 survey was a follow-up to this, with briefer and even more accessible questionnaires completed by 41 members, 35 carers and 65 volunteers. This was supplemented by Zoom workshops involving 20 members and 18 volunteers.

For the first time, we asked about benefits to carers from actively participating in distance activities such as Zoom & social media (as opposed to benefit from respite while the person they cared for participated).

We also asked if people were happy to continue with some distance activities longterm: most were, but some were keen to get back to face-to-face only.

In the Feedback section, Member and volunteer names have been reduced to an initial, but staff names retained.

Impact on Members	Friendships maintained	Greater Happiness	Improved Confidence	More Self-esteem	Better Distance Social Skills	Felt at least 1 outcome	Felt all outcomes
	98%	100%	95%	100%	90%	100%	85%

Impact on Carers	Life Outside Caring	Helped Sustain Caring Role	Greater Wellbeing	Felt at least 1 outcome	Felt all outcomes
From participating in activities	8%	74%	52%	80%	7%
Generally	11%	81%	44%	93%	7%

During lockdown, there was obviously limited scope for us to provide opportunities outside caring, hence the 11% response

Impact on Volunteers	Friendships maintained	Less isolated	Greater Wellbeing	Better Distance Social Skills	General IT Skills	Felt at least 1 outcome	Felt all outcomes
	97%	55%	56%	70%	45%	100%	25%

Should some elements of the distance service continue long term?	Members	Carers	Volunteers
	78%	75%	63%

### Member Feedback

Being a part of Interest Link Roxburgh throughout the pandemic has been great. I've loved the fact that they've allowed me to run my own projects as it's help me get more experience and boost my confidence.

I enjoy the group.

I am pleased to have a helper from interest link to the Allotment group. He's a great help.

Thank you for providing these groups - they have been a lifeline at a really difficult time !

I have enjoyed playing bingo. I will hopefully see you face to face soon.

I have loved all the Interest Link activities and they gave me something to enjoy doing when I was shielding. I really like being part of the group and keeping in touch with everyone. I have enjoyed the artwork and have been trying to do more on my own

I like on a Tuesday morning when we do a blether group. I like this group.

I like talking on Zoom. It is wonderful. I miss my friends at the Katherine Elliot Centre.

I look forward to the sessions every week its very exciting to chat to friends

I love the Interest Link Zoom group meetings. I love the great activities - arts and crafts, cooking and bingo and quizzes - and the time to chat with friends.

Interest link is the best

Interest Link was an important lifeline for me since the start of Lockdown but now I am struggling to cope.

It's been really good to see all my friends on zoom

It's fun seeing new people. Nice to meet A.

K has been brilliant, keeping in touch and keeping us connected, thank you.

Loved seeing people on my tablet and speaking to them.

Not able to get involved very much

Not quite as good as the real thing but good fun Zoom baking!

SR has really enjoyed the craft activities she is finding food in general a bit tricky due to health reasons but looking forward to baking

Thank you for the activities over the covid period .

The zoom calls have kept me happy during lockdown. I've enjoyed trying all the craft activities and chatting to my friends. Thank you.

Blether group is therapeutic.

Very worthwhile.

## Carer feedback

C is excited to see people in the Zoom calls. She enjoys the activities and the creative stimulation which gives her a different focus from her usual routine of watching her DVD's.

Interest Link have provided many interesting zoom activities since October that our daughter has thoroughly enjoyed and has kept her in contact with her friends from Interest Link. This has given her lots to look forward to and talk about. Thank you.

Interest Link is a great organisation and keeps my son busy especially during lockdown while he's been shielding

It has been a boost to watch how much pleasure my daughter G gets from engaging with the Interest Link Zoom meetings. They are so well organised and carefully structured. G misses meeting up with the group in person, but the imaginative way in which Interest Link has kept contact and activities going during the pandemic, with Zoom, as well as the regular Newsletter, has been fantastic.

It has been great having all these group activities. So good keeping everyone in touch and still able to interact with everyone.

It has been great seeing A getting involved with the Zoom chat sessions and Zoom craft sessions. He is now more capable of managing these activities on his own with less support, which is great to see. We love asking him what he wants to contribute to the newsletter and helping him with his photos and contribution. We also love looking through the newsletters to find out what everyone has been up to. Interest Link is a fantastic support for A and even although he cannot attend all the sessions as he works in the evenings he is made to feel very much part of the group. Rosa and Alex have been absolutely outstanding. A credit to Interest Link and all it aims to achieve. They always have great ideas.

It's been a great way to support my son to join in activities & see his friends.

It's been tough for my son this past year but he looked forward to hearing from his friend he met through Interest link and put a smile on his face....he loves L!

My son and I have enjoyed being part of the group and feeling valued and cared for. The online activities have enhanced the benefits of Interest Link for us and we appreciate the bond that the group has. Thank you.

My wife and I are pleased that our son has contact with people other than ourselves. He really enjoys getting the newsletter and looking at it with my wife. They do the puzzles together. It's great he is now getting out to see his friend again. In the past they have had wonderful trips out doing all kinds of interesting things together.

Seems really excited to see friends again over zoom it's a really nice way for her to connect due to being deaf. Using a phone, which can be taken for granted by others, is not an option.

Enjoyed all the activities. J would have liked more younger people and more men !! Felt a little lost in some of the groups as the only male. Craft activities were very female orientated.

So important for my daughter to have contact, sight of friends , greatly missed

Thank you for setting up these groups , which has played a vital part to the services users she has been able to see on zoom and keep up very important friendships. She was also linked with a pen pal which was fantastic for her as she loves looking and waiting for a letter then replying .

The service has been excellent. At the first lockdown we had no carers coming in so my daughter and I were together all the time and Interest Link was a welcome break for us both ! Rosa seemed to know them all and their individual needs and she and the volunteers have devised inventive and appropriate activities and totally understood how important it is to be consistent and dependable for the service users when they can't understand why everything has changed . It has given my daughter things to look forward to and plan for and a sense of normality. I can't thank them enough.

Usually on a Thurs R goes out with his uncle so it was the wrong day for us. That's just a personal thing

We appreciate everything that J and Mary do for N via Interest Link . It has been lovely to see her grow in confidence especially when trying new things. Whilst the many activities that N and J have tried out have been curtailed due to the pandemic, N has enjoyed the contact that she has had with J throughout this difficult time. As always many thanks to J and Mary and to Interest link.

We really appreciated the amount of work and effort that went into preparing for and running the Zoom groups and news letters.

You have kept our son very happy and with a bit of independence as he can sit and participate happily.

You've done a fantastic job keeping our young person entertained and challenged during lockdown. The variety of activities has been great. Well done to Stephanie and the team!

## Volunteer Feedback

It's been great to have been able to keep in touch with everyone on Zoom, and to keep in contact with A who I have been linked with for our weekly telephone chats. His enthusiasm has been infectious!

Love it

Regular contact was important for both of us

The phone buddies was really good at getting time with individual members in a more personal and quiet time

Using what's app to keep connected to my 1:1 link was great to keep in contact and share what we'd been up to.

It is difficult to engage online sometimes.

Very effective. I've enjoyed keeping in contact with group members during a difficult time.

With the correct precautions in place I still managed to meet up with my service user friend.

I feel that we should continue zoom calls etc as I feel that service users enjoy being able to communicate with everyone from the comfort of their own home. I also feel that this would allow service users to contribute more and boost their independence, innovation, and creativity

I think its nice that people who come to a social grp have a way of staying in touch in between group sessions

If sessions can't happen in person due to weather etc doing an online one would be a good alternative

Just anxious to get back to meeting face to face.

Maybe if a session had to be cancelled at the venue, e.g. on a wintry night, we could still Zoom instead, or if a group member couldn't be at the venue they could join us via Zoom.

Nice to keep in touch without the pressure to have any "agenda" as such. Very natural for people just to say "hello" so why not via Zoom etc.

The Chat group, which I have enjoyed, it's been laid back, nice just chatting, and its helped me to get to know people better.

Zoom has been fun and easy to do, so could still Zoom if ever we can't meet face to face.

Zoom sessions to continue as long as necessary, my telephone link with A to also continue, and the chat group.

All the different sessions have been different and there has always been a great variety of activities to make each session unique and allow people to continue to engage every week.

Everyone involved have done really well, and i am sure this has helped everyone to keep in contact with each other.

I have absolutely loved being a part of interest link during lockdown.

Interest Link have done a great job of keeping service users and volunteers connected.

It must have taken a lot to organise everything. You've done a really great job.

Prefer in person

Really enjoy being part of the interest link group, it's been great to keep in touch with everyone through zoom. So much effort has been put in to trying to keep people connected over this difficult time and it's amazing!

Really enjoyed the projects and being involved. Great fun and educational as well.

Thank you to everyone who has kept ILB going in a really challenging time !

The activities that have been sent out have been phenomenal. I know how much A has really enjoyed getting the packs in the post.

The zoom was good but I did not see everyone and not everyone could access.

When I first joined the group on Zoom I was feeling an 'excited nervousness'. I can be shy so find it easier to talk in the breakout rooms.

Would rather get back to normal voluntary work as soon as possible.