



London Community Response Fund W3 – 24.02.2021

The purpose of the project:

To capture experiences and learning from the Covid-19 situation.



The main aims of the project were:

1. To ask leaders of self-advocacy organisations how they have been managing over the last 7 months – what has worked well and what hasn't worked so well
2. To bring leaders of self-advocacy groups together so we can support each other, share ideas and do things together

We spoke to members of self advocacy organisations across London between September 2020 and February 2021.

This included representatives from 10 London based self advocacy organisations.

Our main findings

	<p>It was very hard for self advocacy organisations to support people at the beginning of the pandemic. People were very scared, distressed and confused.</p>
	<p>Members of self advocacy organisations have been used to all (or most) activities being face-to-face.</p>
	<p>Members of self advocacy organisations found it difficult to get support to help them use digital devices and communicate online.</p>
	<p>Many members of self advocacy organisations have been shielding since April 2020.</p>
	<p>Self advocacy organisations have had to do things differently. E.g., stopping usual activities and making regular 'wellbeing calls' to members, running errands and helping to sort support.</p>



It took a lot of time for workers and volunteers to help people with learning difficulties to connect using smart devices, tablets or computers – it has been difficult to get everyone online.



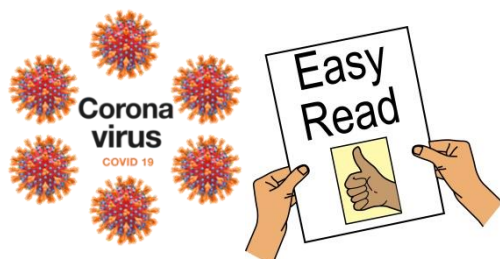
People living in residential accommodation found it difficult to access the internet and get support from staff to join online meetings and activities.



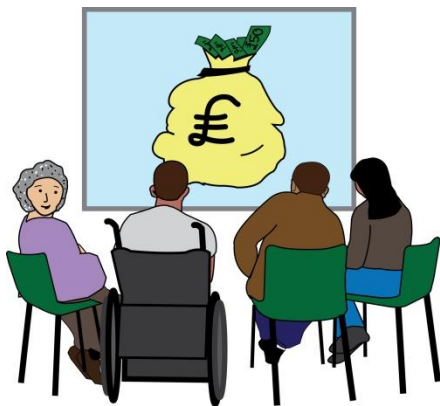
Self advocacy organisations need support in developing and improving their digital communications and systems.



Some self advocacy organisations have developed their skills and confidence to use apps like WhatsApp, YouTube, Zoom and social media platforms.



Some self advocacy organisations produced their own accessible information about Covid-19.



Some organisations have been able to apply for Covid-19 emergency grants. This has helped them purchase equipment and devices for their members and organise online activities and events.



Some self advocacy organisations have been able to set up regular online meetings and have developed programmes of social activities.

Here is a summary of some of the things people said they have learnt and what they need.



Not everyone is computer literate. Staff and supporters need training to train people with learning difficulties to use technology.



Job Descriptions for support and care staff need to include helping people use technology.



Share information about what has helped during the pandemic with other self advocacy organisations.



Have more Zoom meetings with other self advocacy organisations across London.



The Accessible Information campaigning is even more important now.



Media to talk directly to self-advocacy organisations and people with learning difficulties to ask our opinions about things.



Make more videos and use YouTube to share information and get our voices heard.

This work was funded by

