



Signal

Remote Facilitation Guide

A Frontline Perspective



How to use SIGNAL remotely: in conversation with Kirsty McDine-Daniels



Kirsty is a Community Development Worker at the Millin Charity in Newcastle Upon Tyne. She is delivering Steps Together, an exciting new project for unemployed women in Newcastle. The project provides a range of support services designed to help women explore opportunities, learn new skills, increase their confidence, and increase their jobs prospects & opportunities.


Kirsty is using SIGNAL to help participants to identify the actions they need to take to achieve their goals and to support them through the process.

The Millin Charity has continued to run the project during the Pandemic in circumstances where face-to-face meetings are not possible

Robert Webb is a founding director of SIGNAL in the UK. Here he talks to Kirsty about her experience of using SIGNAL remotely and her top tips to help others develop their own good practice



Does Remote Facilitation work?

 I must say I was a little sceptical at first because face-to-face contact has been the essence of how we work with people. However, I surprised myself with how adaptable it actually is and how easy it was for me to make adjustments at my end. The main thing is that the various options available mean that I can go through the SIGNAL survey with people remotely whatever access to IT they have.

Just after the first lockdown (on 23rd March 2020), most of the SIGNAL surveys we did were over the phone. It worked really well – much to our surprise, because we thought that without the illustrations, it might be difficult for people to understand the questions. But, even though it took a bit longer because we had to read out the questions, people appreciated the opportunity to have a structured conversation. I think it really helped because so

many people were feeling anxious and isolated.

As the Pandemic developed and we all got used to using technology to keep in touch with people, we increasingly used video conferencing which has the huge advantage of both me and the person being able to look at the survey and discuss and work on the Life Map section together.

We've also have the 'Remote Survey' option which is where we can issue secure login details to someone so they can complete the survey themselves in their own time. The key to making this option work is to make sure that everyone understands that although they might be taking the survey on their own, it is still a facilitated process because they can contact us at any time they need any help or guidance and also, when they get to their Life Map, we will contact them to have a conversation with them about their priorities just like we would in face-to-face meetings.



What has been the most positive thing about remote facilitation?



That it works! Also, I was struck by how relaxed some people were in the comfort of their own homes. It seemed to encourage them to open up more. So, even when people are able to come to our workshops and events in person, it will be nice to still offer them the option of doing SIGNAL remotely if that's what would suit them best.



What have been the main challenges of working remotely?



People can get very stressed and frustrated with their laptops!! We have benefited from a laptop distribution scheme as part of the response to the Pandemic, and this has meant we have invested a lot of time (and patience) in guiding people how to use computers who have had little or no access to them. Although it's sometimes been difficult it's been very worthwhile

because, like with SIGNAL, it is all part of the effort to introduce new skills and to build resilience in the community.



Will you continue to use remote facilitation even after it's possible to return to face-to-face work?



Make no mistake, wherever possible we will be delivering our services face-to-face. However, the Pandemic has shown us that this won't always be possible. We think it's very important to be in a position to offer a consistent service that can keep going come what may, so, regarding SIGNAL in particular, we can mix and match face-to-face and remote facilitation, and within the remote facilitation we can mix and match the various options. It feels normal to be thinking like this now. We have tried and tested all the options and it's great to have the confidence that they work and are available when needed so that we can tailor our services to suit individual need.

Kirsty's Top Tips for Remote Facilitation

- ◆ **There are 5 options for Remote Facilitation, so you can be confident it will work whether or not a person has access to a computer or a smart phone.**
- ◆ **The role of the Facilitator is key, whichever option is used. Having conversations with people to identify their priorities and what their next steps are remains the most important part of the process**
- ◆ **Be open to the idea that some people might prefer to take SIGNAL in the comfort of their own homes, even when we can return to face-to-face meetings**

You can watch our Remote Facilitation video guide which takes you through each of the 5 options in detail:



Remote Facilitation



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