

Case study - Cal, Isle of Lewis

Cal works in admin for his local authority and was lucky to maintain his job during the pandemic. He moved back home from Glasgow to care for his sick parents. He had hoped to move back to Glasgow before the pandemic but wasn't able to due to the lockdown. This is something he hopes he will be able to do soon.

During the pandemic, Cal has felt very isolated and lonely. ***"It felt like being 'back in the closet' and not being able to be myself, feeling like a teenager being back at home"***. Cal was already suffering from depression before the pandemic and this led to both his mental and physical health being affected.

Cal considered support with his mental health but said he ***"wouldn't feel comfortable accessing a face to face mental health support service on the island"*** because he worried about people knowing or finding out and judging him. He said he would find an online or telephone service helpful instead.

During lockdown he couldn't get to the mainland to visit friends in Glasgow and while this had a negative effect on him, he was able to keep in touch with them through virtual facetime meetings and social media.

Cal said ***"Living on an island, digital technology and internet access has been a big help to maintain contact with friends, family and services online during the pandemic"***.

He also mentioned the fact the Island had no tourists for 6 months meant it was ***"the same faces he was seeing all the time when he went out"*** and this made him feel trapped as he enjoys meeting new people and attending social events and festivals that would normally take place on the island.

Cal told me that ***"Lewis has got it right when helping the local community get through the pandemic by providing a delivery service to those living on the island providing them with essential supplies"***.

When talking about access to local healthcare services on the island during the pandemic, Cal told me he required emergency dental treatment and wasn't able to get this when he needed it. He also explained how he was his friend's birthing partner and found it upsetting that he wasn't allowed in to the hospital before the birth and had to leave immediately after not giving him any time to spend with his friend or the baby.



Cals worries and challenges for the immediate future while the pandemic is ongoing are being forced to live at home for potentially another year.

“Due to the ongoing pandemic and local lockdown restrictions not knowing when my life will start again because it’s been on pause”.

He also worries about going back to a full lockdown during the winter and how it will affect the Island’s economy having no tourists able to visit.

He fears many businesses on the Island will not survive.