

## Hill House Outcomes Narrative

During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Hill House School saw two young people move home, away from the school. Even under normal circumstances, extensive and detailed planning goes into supporting all moves and a large part of this is typically done with face-to-face contact. Usually, the new care providers would spend time at Hill House along with our young people visiting their new home.

With the unusual times, the team developed a creative and innovative way to support each move in order to overcome the barriers presented by COVID-19. Involvement from the people around each young person was essential, including the staff, social worker, new providers and of course, their family.

Regular video meetings were scheduled in order to share information and discuss what needed to be in place for each young person before going into their new environment. In turn, 'Virtual visits' were organised where the new providers were able to meet with the students and observe them taking part in different activities. These 'visits' also provided opportunity for the new staff to speak to key members of the team who have got to know the young people during their time at Hill House School.

Perhaps the most valuable initiative for both the young people was the development of a 'digital story'. A digital story is a short video that shows what an individual's day looks like and what their interests and priorities are. They are a powerful means of expression for voices that can be difficult to hear in a more typical way. Digital stories provide insight into an individual's world and are a powerful way to show what their means of communication are.

Hill House School is proud to say that these digital stories became part of a wider piece of research undertaken by the University of Southampton, with the team providing advice and support along the way.

The result was that each young person had a way of presenting themselves through a story, shared with their family and those who would be supporting them in the future. At a time when there needed to be a reliance on the use of technology, the stories formed a vital part of each young person's move and contributed to each young person making a positive next step and settling in well into their new home.

Our digital story collaboration with the University of Southampton has been a huge success. The feedback we have received from new providers, parents and social workers during the moving home process has been incredibly positive and powerful.

***"Elliott's digital story was really fantastic and so well put together, with Elliott's right at the centre of it. Lots of careful transition planning has contributed to the success of his move" (University of Southampton)***

***In Alice's Digital story the feedback received was that 'it celebrated her personality and achievements' and shows 'how relationships are important to her and her cheeky side!!' (Hill House School Care Manager)***

***'It not only celebrates all the great life skills that Elliott has learnt, but shows almost the essence of him' (parent)***

***'It was great to see in action all the activities Alice enjoys and how her personality shines through' (new care team)***

The move for both young people went well and team at Hill House have since learnt that they're settling into their new homes, enjoying new opportunities and meeting new people.

With more practice at manoeuvring the restrictions put in place during the pandemic, Hill House hope to create a way to allow face to face visits, whilst continuing to develop digital stories for our students. The school is in the process of supporting two more students moving home, both of which are closer to their families. One of these young people is able to be more directly involved in their own story and the school hope to be able to support him in putting together his own video based on choices about what he would like others to know about him.

Moving home is always an exciting, yet worrying time for families and we continue to work together to try to ensure that the move goes as smoothly as possible. We strive for the outcomes for every young person to be as positive as they can be, in their preparation for adulthood.