

June 2020

# Staying Home Update

**INCLUSION**  
**GLOUCESTERSHIRE**

BIGGER DREAMS ► BETTER LIVES ► BRIGHTER FUTURES

## Hello to our members, partners, colleagues, funders and friends!

We have all been missing each other since we moved to a remote way of working in March. We wanted to issue a special update, sharing what we have been up to and how you can get involved

## Learning Disability Partnership Board Update

We couldn't have an LDPB in June so Co-Chairs Tim and Jan have issued a video update:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5rGloWmrR0>

## BME Friendship Group

The Friendship Hub have really been supportive of each other during lockdown. The anxiety and struggles have been made easier by having a really friendly WhatsApp group where members have shared their creative ideas and wellbeing suggestions. We enjoyed a wonderful two week webcam update of some beautiful Great Tits who were raising their young. The nesting box camera was in a friends garden and we all enjoyed watching the babies hatch and grow. When the fledglings finally left the nest, it was both emotional and a true miracle. It gave us all hope that soon we will also be able to 'fledge' from this lockdown and meet our friends and loved ones again.

This month, the group have been invited by The Friendship Café Sewing Studio to participate in a 'Sew Along'. Each participant who registers will be sent a resource pack and then we will sew a mini project at home with short videos and zoom calls.

The group have enjoyed exercise programmes and will be participating in a Tapping session to help relieve anxiety. The wellbeing of the group has been our main focus and it has been a pleasure to see the group become stronger friends even though we are all distanced.

We truly believe that 'Good friends are like stars, you don't have to see them to know that they are there'



## COVID-19 resource hub

Sometimes it can be hard to find information about Coronavirus that we can trust and is easy to understand. We have created a hub of resources that we trust and are accessible about COVID-19 (thanks to funding from Gloucestershire County Council):

<https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/covid-19/>

## Checking in with our friends during Lockdown

Hub Project Worker, Shaun, makes weekly calls to people who would usually attend our Forest of Dean Hub to check in on how they are doing and offer support.

He said having friendships with the Hub members has helped him make the phone calls, it has really helped his confidence talking to everyone and it gives him a boost. He said it is important to him to make the calls because some people do not have many friends and the calls keep them going. He said, "a little phone call makes them happy".

Not being able to see everyone is hard so this is a way that Shaun can keep in contact and still be a great friend.



## Staying Connected

Volunteering is a way of staying connected during the lockdown period. Here is what one of our GEM participants has to say:

'Throughout the lockdown phase I have continued as a volunteer with Inclusion Gloucestershire. The team provided me with a laptop which supports me to complete admin tasks at home. It also enables me to engage with my colleagues regularly via video conferencing - this is a new computer skill for me. I joined the Inclusion Gloucestershire Green Impact Committee in March and more recently took part in an online audit of our Green Impact work. I am also continuing to engage as a GEM participant. I have received regular contact and support from my Navigator Developer which has helped me feel connected at a time when other services and opportunities are on hold. Over the last few months I have taken part in a variety of online sessions focussing on interview skills and wellbeing via GEM Online. The sessions are useful and help take my mind away from negative thoughts. My mental wellbeing has been affected by the lockdown. However, my engagement with Inclusion Gloucestershire and GEM has helped me to stay positive and connected.'

## Supporting people remotely

Hub project Worker Clare says: I call and message lots of members weekly and monthly. There are some members I have been speaking to daily just to offer more support for them. One member said he looks forward to my calls as I'm the main person he speaks to.

We also have a WhatsApp group which works well and keeps members engaging with each other daily! One of our hub members is admin on the group which is great as she feeds back to me if I am unable to be on the group chat!

Members are very happy I am still in contact

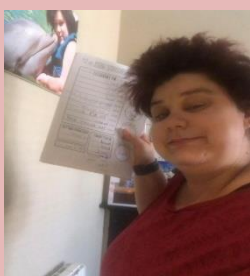
and although it's not the same as face to face contact they are enjoying our chats and groups, I think

the remote support is working really well and is really making a difference to the Hub members.



## Activity Packs

We know that not everybody has access to the internet, and sometimes there's nothing quite like something that you can write on, colour in and keep. So we post out Activity Packs to our Hub members, and where we can we personalise them! If unicorns are your favourite thing, you can expect unicorn colouring in. If you are on a healthy eating kick, perhaps some healthy recipes!



Here is Gemma with the pack Clare sent her. She said, 'I really liked it and want another one!' It cheered her up and she loved the certificate in the pack to congratulate her on staying at home during COVID-19!

If you would like an Activity Pack or remote support like a regular phone call, fill in our membership form here:

<https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/>

## NHS – have your say!

Want the NHS to hear how things can be better for people who have learning disabilities and/or autism? Take our survey! You can do it online here:



<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/InclusionGlos> or phone 07525 848514 and ask for an easy read paper version which we will send to you with a return envelope!

## GEM Support

Inclusion Gloucestershire work closely with the GEM Project supporting people to take steps towards education, training and employment. The GEM service continues to run throughout lockdown and Navigator Developer Emily is always looking for ways to support our participants.

One of our GEM participants has a talent for baking and going forward she is looking to start up her own cake-making business. Throughout lockdown it has been difficult for her to obtain certain ingredients including self-raising flour, caster sugar and icing sugar. By working together, members of the GEM team were able to source the ingredients required and delivered them to her door. We have since received impressive photographs of the resulting Chelsea buns, peanut butter cupcakes and strawberry sponge made with fresh cream!

“Whilst lockdown restrictions have been in place I have continued to engage with my GEM Navigator Developer and remained focussed on my goal of self-employment. It was great to receive the delivery of ingredients from GEM which enabled me to continue baking and try out a new recipe too! Cake-making is something I really enjoy and it helps me to maintain good mental health and wellbeing.”



## A new way of working

Hub Project Worker, Louise, says: The calls have been great for me to keep in contact with members and relieve my worries about how they are doing when they aren't able to come to the hub. The members really appreciate the call and often thank me for taking time out of my day to call them. Working from home can be lonely so the calls also help cheer me up and put a smile on my face. Working from home has also given me the flexibility to speak to members during the evening and at weekends which I hadn't previously done and the members wouldn't previously expect as they only see me during 'office hours'.



And one of our Cheltenham Hub members shared their point of view: “The texts and video calls have been a real boost as this lockdown has affected me badly and to know someone cares and shares with you is great and much appreciated”.

## Contact us – we are still here!

We are still offering our services remotely – get in touch or look at our website to find out more.

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