

Volunteer & Advocacy

NEWSLETTER

A warm
welcome to our
newest staff
member!



Issue 2 2026

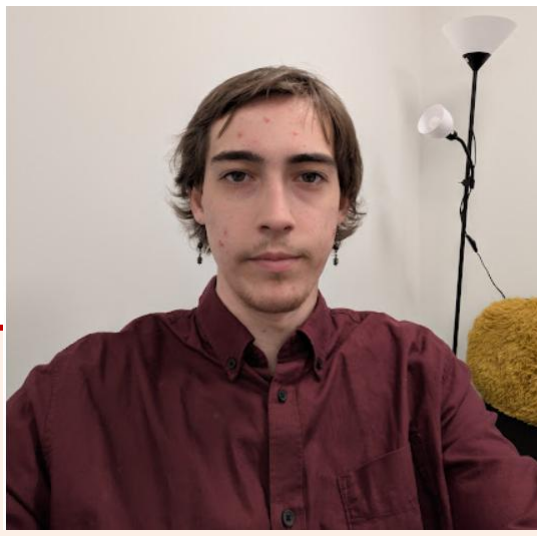
My name is Ionut Abroham (which I ask people to pronounce “Yona”), and I’ve joined Inclusion Gloucestershire as a Project Worker on the ENAWU project. Prior to this, I volunteered as a peer mentor on the UNBOXED project, which is how I first discovered the organisation. I was born in Romania, but I’ve been living in the UK since the age of eight. Going to school in London for two years was a melting pot of diversity and began this spark of inclusivity and open mindedness that I hope to champion always.

I’ve lived in the Forest of Dean since 2012, so I felt particularly drawn to Inclusion Gloucestershire as I enjoy living in the county.

Over the years, I’ve worked with and for various charities, and I’ve always found that kind of work especially fulfilling - far more rewarding than some of the other roles I’ve had which include (in historical order): mechanic, bartender, social media manager, green skills apprentice and farmhand in Thailand, short-term English teacher abroad, Tesco colleague, cleaning agency administrator and cleaner, and Business Mentor Volunteer with The King’s Trust.

Since starting at Inclusion Gloucestershire, I’ve been developing my understanding of the ENAWU project and its aims. I’m looking forward to taking on more responsibilities over time and I thrive when I keep busy, I love being swamped with work and always having something to do. In the meantime, I try to stay proactive by familiarising myself with materials and resources, and by supporting others in the office wherever I can.

What initially drew me to the organisation was the UNBOXED project’s focus on neurodivergent adults. Sharing my lived experience of dyslexia at my first peer mentor meeting was probably the first time I truly felt understood—it was a genuinely eye-opening experience.



Before this, I had been unemployed for around 7–8 months and found myself in a vulnerable place. I experienced anxiety, low mood, and a lack of direction—feelings that often arise when I don't have a clear sense of purpose. During my time at the University of South Wales, where I studied Business and Management, I struggled with aspects of academic writing such as literature reviews and research methodology. After seeking support through student services, I was diagnosed with dyslexia and given additional time and resources, which made a significant difference. That said, some habits—like working close to deadlines and staying up late drinking black coffee—didn't help.

With the right support in place, I was able to overcome many of these challenges. I discovered that I was academically capable and went on to graduate with a First-Class BA (Hons), which I'm proud of. That said, if you asked me now whether university is always worth it, I'd say it really depends on the career path.

After graduating, I realised how difficult it can be to secure meaningful employment, even with a degree. This gave me valuable insight into the challenges many people in my generation face in an imbalanced job market. It's easy to see how people can feel stuck even after pursuing the things they love, as though their lives lack meaning or direction before they've truly begun. It may seem like idealism, but I strive for unconditional altruism and putting in my best at everything I do.

Through my role in the ENAWU project, I hope to make a positive difference in people's lives. I want to empower and encourage others to step outside their comfort zones, explore their interests, and pursue opportunities they might otherwise feel too anxious to take. Being part of the ENAWU team is a great opportunity for me to do just that.

Hobbies and interests:

Some of my main interests include arts and crafts, hiking, camping, climbing, cycling in the woods near my home, video games, computers, reading, film, travelling and exploring, working on cars, and anything related to plants, nature and history.

VOLUNTEERING & ADVOCACY

YEAR 2 REFLECTIONS

Headlines:

- * **5,047 people have seen the new films or productions this year.**
- * **5 people have benefited from volunteering as advocacy peer mentors.**
- * **276 people have accessed advocacy through the project.**

Speak Up Group themes:

1. Housing.
2. Accessing healthcare in retirement.
3. Accessibility of public transport in rural areas to facilitate wider access to leisure activities.
4. Accessibility transport in rural areas for University students with disabilities.

A reoccurring theme from receiving 1:1 advocacy:

- * Through the housing focused advocacy session, forum theatre was utilised to identify and practice self-advocacy strategies to use in real world, challenging situations, with one attendee explaining that they *"loved acting. It's a lot easier to be someone else than it is to be me. What I just did up there is what I want to do outside."*
 - * A report that captured the personal experiences and key themes (around housing) was also produced and then shared with the local council.

Feedback from people supported through 1:1 Advocacy:

"I know what my rights are, and I feel more confident to speak up for myself, I also built new relationships with my mentor and P.A"

"I think your services are amazing, you don't judge you accommodate every ability so well and you all make a person feel valid in life which is so important"

"I felt that I was helped as much as they could and they listened and showed me opportunities."

"She was a very nice lady, very supportive and understanding of my needs."

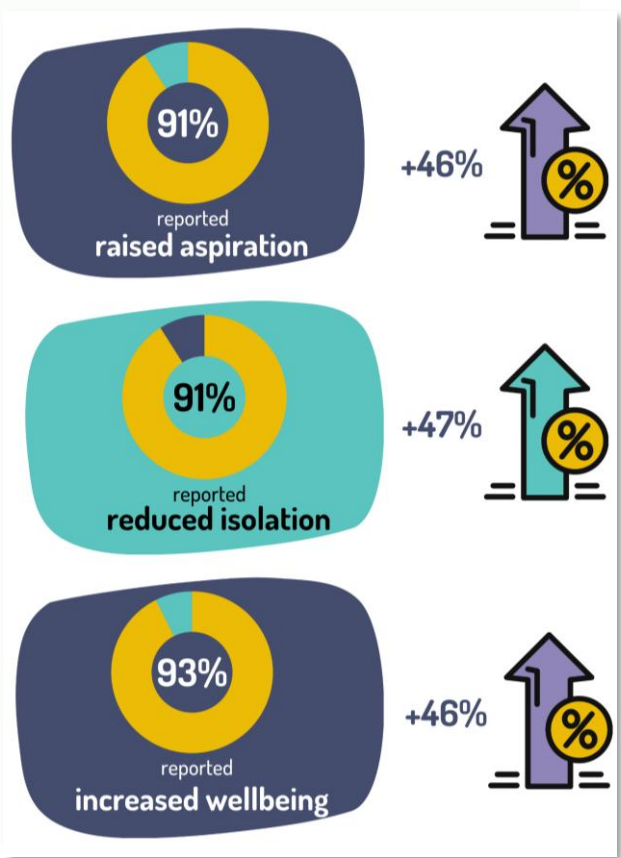
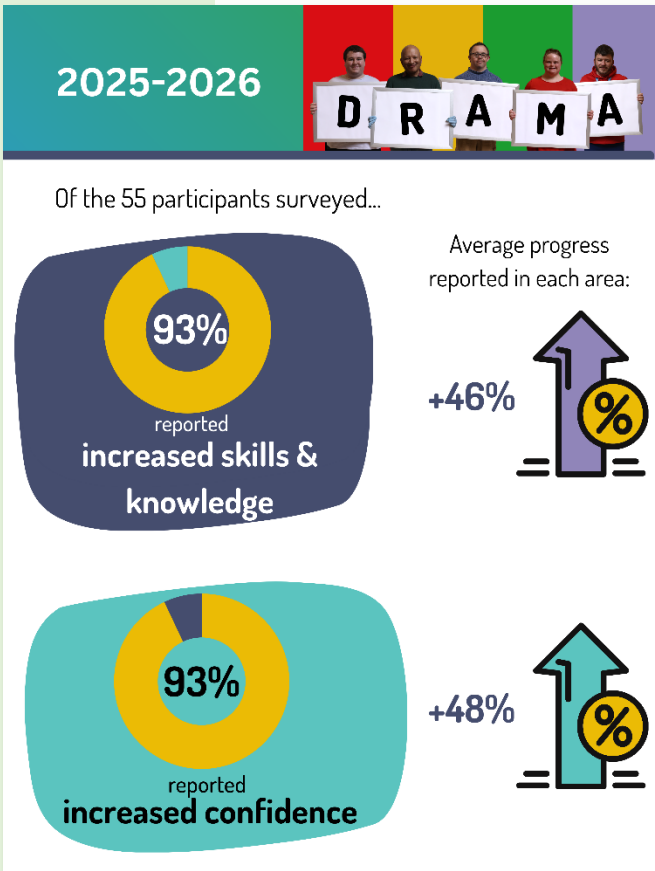
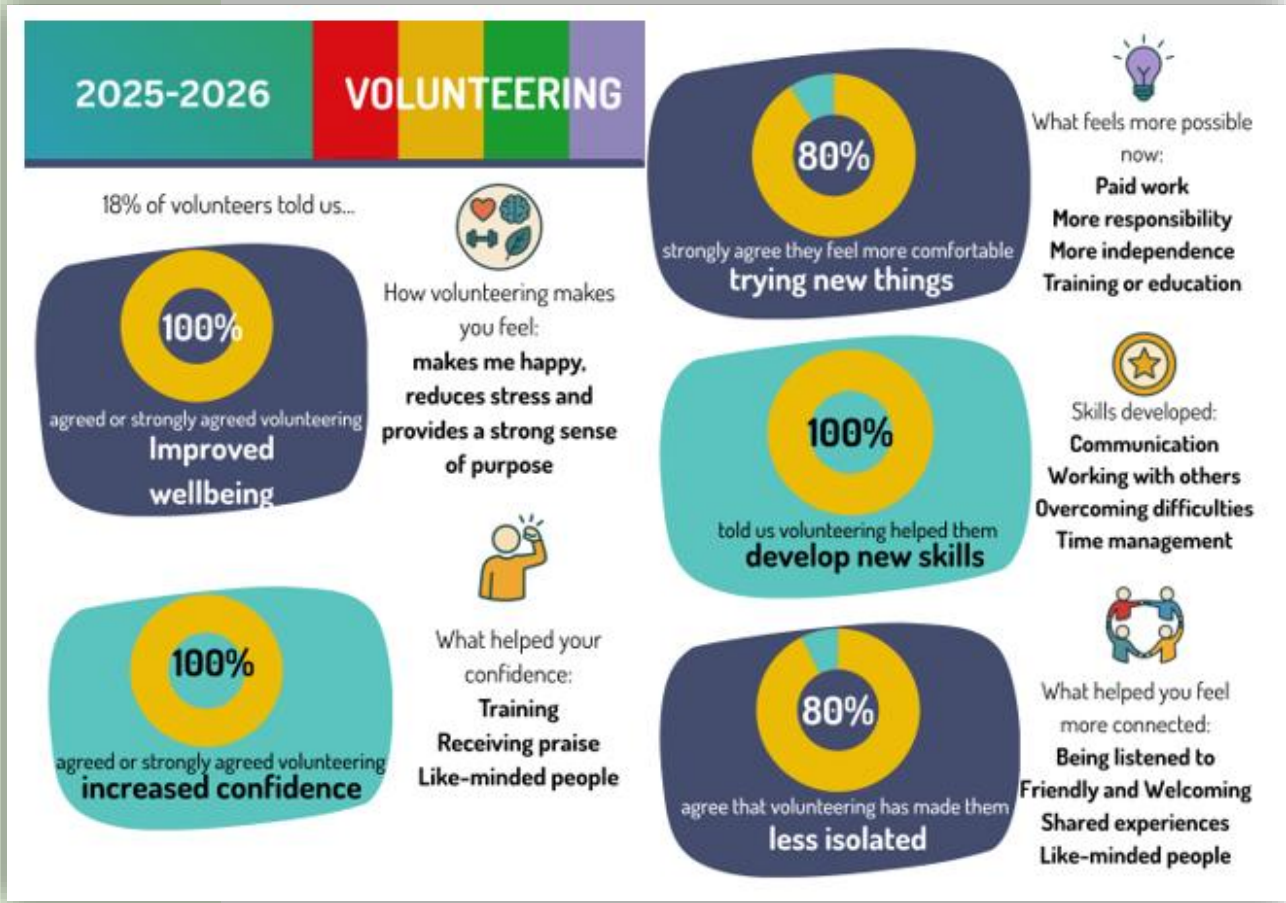
Feedback from a filming volunteer:

"Filming with the drama group has been a dynamic and particularly rewarding process and I'm learning a lot. I am enjoying the in-person nature of it. The positive outcomes are quickly evident both during filming sessions and when watching back the unedited footage."

Advocacy Volunteer Training Impact: 80-100% of participants felt that they were very confident with their skills & knowledge, confidence growth, aspiration needs being met, and their wellbeing strengthened whilst on the ENAWU project.

VOLUNTEERING & ADVOCACY

YEAR 2 REFLECTIONS



Eco Hub & Drama Updates



Our new Eco Hub project is now underway. It helps people with a learning disability learn about climate change, connect with nature and take positive action to help our planet. We have held two workshops at our offices. In the first workshop, we introduced the topic of climate change and asked people what they already knew and what they wanted to learn. In the second workshop, we learned more about what climate change means. We have been talking, playing games and getting creative!

We have also been on our first nature walk. We had a great morning at Robinswood Hill Country Park. We found wooden sculptures, played nature bingo and used our senses to notice the natural world around us. We are already looking forward to our next workshop and our trip to Slimbridge Wetland Centre in November. A new volunteer will also be joining the team to support the project.

If you would like to find out more, please email: rosannag@inclusion-glos.org



Last term, the Gloucester Drama 1 group worked on a new silent film called 'The Bench'. The film shows why inclusion is important and the benefits it can bring. We filmed on a very hot day, but the group did brilliantly and worked well as a team. Some members worked as part of the cast, and others as part of the film crew. Our fantastic volunteer supported the members and looked after the many props and costumes. We will share the finished film soon, so keep an eye on our YouTube channel.



We have now started a second drama group in Gloucester. The group meets on Wednesdays at St Mary de Crypt. Another brilliant volunteer is supporting the group, and we are very pleased that they have returned to work with us after some time away. Both Gloucester drama groups are starting to come up with ideas for a performance for next year. We look forward to sharing more details in the coming months.

We also continue to deliver short drama, film and mindfulness courses. We really enjoyed returning to The Grange in the Forest of Dean at the beginning of this term for a film making course and are soon to start a new drama and mindfulness course at the Beeches Centre in Stroud.

If you are interested in finding out more, please email: drama@inclusion-glos.org



Accessible Holidays

According to Skyscanner “51% of disabled respondents reported that they [found] holidays stressful”. With this in mind it’s important to choose the right location and to plan carefully ahead if possible.

Finding the right accommodation is essential, as it will often act as the base for the entirety of the stay. It is always best to book ahead, if possible, to make sure that the accessibility features that you may need are available – such as wheelchair ramps, lifts, wider doorways, and accessible bathrooms and restaurants etc.

Websites such as:

1. Disabled Holidays

(www.disabledholidays.com/)

will search for holidays both in the UK and abroad that will cater for those with accessible needs.



3. Limitless Travel

(www.limitlesstravel.org)

offers cruises and coach holidays both in the UK and Europe.



Within the UK sites like **Parkdean Resorts** and **Haven** both offer accessible accommodation across their sites around the country that will cater for accessibility needs.

2. Enable Holiday

(www.enableholidays.com)

will provide tailor made, accessible holidays to those with wheelchair and mobility impairments.



By: Elisabeth Wall

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Advocacy Volunteer Peer Mentor role with Inclusion Gloucestershire:

Peer Mentor support people to build or regain their confidence and independence. Inclusion Gloucestershire are looking for those with lived experience of disabilities to help deliver advocacy and mentoring to disabled people in Gloucestershire.

We are looking for support with:

- **1:1 peer mentoring:** to help others to identify what support they would like and working to help improve their quality of life.
- **Befriending:** to support people to attend Inclusion Hubs and other activities and events.
- **Group Advocacy (Speak Up Groups):** enable others to have a say in a group environment on topics that are important to them.
- **Supporting People with Completing Forms.**
- **Attending Meetings and Events:** to help share information about our peer mentoring.

Volunteering Commitment:

Time Commitment: We ask for a minimum commitment of 2 hours per week, on average.

Days: the core hours of the Advocacy services are Monday and Wednesdays 9am – 5pm, and Friday 9am - 12pm. This is also when our staff will be available to support you.

Locations: 1:1 peer mentoring and group advocacy sessions run from Inclusion Gloucestershire, as well as online using Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

Other support for individuals to access community activities will vary with locations across the county.

Why become a peer mentor:

- Make a difference and be part of a team achieving positive outcomes for disabled people in Gloucestershire
- Use your own experience to support individuals to make positive changes in other people's lives.
- Give back and support your local community whilst developing your understanding of advocacy and service provision.
- Valuable experience for anyone wishing to work in the voluntary sector and/ or in disability and inclusion.

If you are interested in volunteering, please **complete our application form**, or **contact Faye on 07525848514 or email: faye@inclusion-glos.org** This volunteer role requires an enhanced DBS check. For the full job description, please check out Inclusion Gloucestershire's website.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

Social Media Volunteer role with Inclusion

Gloucestershire:

To plan, write and schedule engaging social media content, that reflects our organisational values (above). Content may also need to be written and published on an 'ad-hoc' basis.

Following our marketing guidelines, the social media volunteer will support team members from across the organisation to make content that publicises our work, the work of our partners and the impact that it has.

Alongside this, the social media volunteer will research and develop a calendar of key events and awareness days, that provides an opportunity for Inclusion Gloucestershire to publish social media content.

We are keen to improve the accessibility of our social media content and would like a volunteer to be part of this.

Volunteering Commitment:

Time Commitment: We ask for a minimum commitment of 2 hours per week, on average.

Days: flexible.

Locations: our office (Railway House, Bruton Way, Gloucester, GL1 1DG) and / or work from home.

Availability to attend the office for role specific training would be preferable.

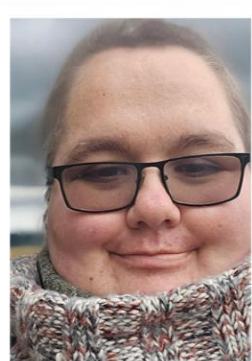
What we are looking for:

- Lived experience of or a genuine interest in working with people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities and people with lived experience of mental ill health.
- Competent using Facebook and Instagram (training will be provided on how we plan and schedule social media posts).
- Willing to undertake role specific training, including for Canva and Hootsuite.
- Able to share information and content in a positive way in line with Inclusion Gloucestershire's values and mission.
- Able to develop positive working relationships with team members.
- Ability to follow instructions.
- Able to work independently.
- To be honest, reliable and trustworthy.

If you are interested in volunteering, please **complete our application form**, or email volunteering@inclusion-glos.org. This volunteer role requires an enhanced DBS check. For the full job description, please check out Inclusion Gloucestershire's website.

Things to do in Autumn

By: Elisabeth Wall



From leaf peeping at Westonbirt Arboretum to a Spooky Halloween Coffee morning, why not try some of these events this Autumn:

Spooky Halloween Coffee Morning *Orchard Trust, Valley Springs, Central Lydbrook GL17 9PP.* 30th October 10am to 12pm, Wheelchair accessible.

Cheltenham Farmers Market (*The Promenade, Cheltenham*) 9am – 2pm second and last Friday of the month.

Cirencester History Festival running from 23rd of October to 1st of November.

The Ready-Set-Sing Family Trail. *Gloucester Cathedral.* 5th of August to 1st of November. £1.50 for a trail sheet.

Pick Your Own – Primrose Vale (*Shurdington Road*) 1st of June 2026 – 31st of October 2026..

Film Chelt *Cheltenham*
October 30th – November 8th.



Culture & Company *Gloucester Guildhall, GL1 1NS.*
Monthly arts and social club for people over 50. It is free but booking is required.



Cheltenham Craft Market (*Promenade, Cheltenham*) every third Saturday 9am – 5pm.

Pick Your Own – Hayles Fruit Farm. (*Winchcombe, Cheltenham, GL54 5PB*). 1st of June 2026 – 31st of October 2026..



Pick Your Own – Hayles Fruit Farm. (*Winchcombe, Cheltenham, GL54 5PB*). 1st of June 2026 – 31st of October 2026.

Useful Contacts

PALs - 0800 0151 548

NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service offers confidential advice, support and information on health-related matters.

Victim Support - 0808 281 0112**POhWER - 0300 456 2370**

Statutory Advocacy provider for Gloucestershire. This is different to community or peer lead advocacy that Inclusion Gloucestershire provides.

CAB – 0808 189 6280

Citizens Advice Bureau

CASA - 01452 317460

Community Autism Support & Advice across Gloucestershire for all adults with Autism.

GL Communities - 01452 505544

Advice & Resource Centre / Matson – Gloucester

GGLC - 07942383275

Gloucestershire Gay & Lesbian Community

**Gloucestershire Service Directory** - for care, support, places and people: <https://www.yourcircle.org.uk/>**Gloucestershire's Drug & Alcohol Services –**
01452 223 014**Gloucestershire Domestic Abuse Support Service (GDASS) –** 01452 726570 or 08082000247**Emergency Homelessness Assistance –**
01452 396396**Gloucester and District Samaritans – 116 123.****The Cavern (Kingfishers Treasure Seekers):**
mental health drop ins 6pm to 10pm every night.

INCLUSION GLOUCESTERSHIRE

BIGGER DREAMS ► BETTER LIVES ► BRIGHTER FUTURES

A note of thanks from the Volunteer Coordinator Paul Tyrrell

A huge thank you to all our volunteers who kindly offer their time to support our work across various projects.

We have been fortunate to welcome some new volunteers over the last few months and, with the invaluable help of Elisabeth, our Newsletter volunteer, I look forward to sharing more about how they are helping us in the next newsletter.

With acknowledgement and thanks to our Advocacy teams Partners:

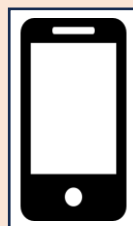
Access Social Care, Building Circles, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucestershire University, Leonard Cheshire, National Star College, Novalis Trust and Severn Wye Warm and Well.

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www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/