

Volunteer & Advocacy NEWSLETTER



Issue 1 2024



As we welcome in the Spring, we look forward to new beginnings and the development of our Volunteer & Advocacy work.

Our deep thanks go to everyone who contributes their time and energy freely with the aim of helping others. To those who support others to find their way through difficult times and to those that share their knowledge and skills, passions, enthusiasm and energy, to make Inclusion Gloucestershire the kind and caring community that it is.

Thank you to all our amazing hub volunteers, which include Nadine, Pauline, Caroline, Lorraine and Melvyn as pictured above. We look forward to our adventures in 2024.

Peer Mentor CONGRATULATIONS!



A NOTE FROM DAVE

Advocacy Mentor & Trainer EBE

Congratulations are in order to all of the volunteer peer mentors who have successfully completed the introduction to advocacy training. This in-house training programme covered the background to why advocacy is needed, showed how advocates can offer appropriate support and help, helped give an understanding of the advocacy Charter and the expectations of what advocacy hopes to deliver, the chance to practice communication skills and to explore some real-life scenarios based around how advocacy has helped individuals.

The training consisted of three sessions and was delivered by Dave and Faye using a combination of both face-to-face and online opportunities to participate. It is intended to recognise the success of these volunteers in completing all three modules of training and those certificates were presented recording the achievement at the celebration event in January 2024.

Successful participants included the following volunteers;

- Wayne
- Aidan
- Elisa
- Jackie
- Jesse
- Kay
- Lotus
- Daniel



Aidan

Volunteering as a Peer Mentor



Volunteering for Gloucester Inclusion is empowering and motivational.

For myself it is simply about seeing people happy, empowered, encouraged and motivated.

To witness someone's personal growth, interests, passions and abilities take on new meaning.

There really is no greater gratitude for me in seeing someone improve themselves.

I look forward to supporting people in their development as we embark upon some achievable goals to start with and see where it goes from there.

We cannot change the wind, but we can adjust our sails to reach our destination.

Aidan Graham-Knox

Follow the Yellow Brick Road!

It is always good when a plan comes together, and that was certainly the case with the celebration event, which showed the successes of the Volunteering, Advocacy and Drama projects over the last 3 years.



It was agreed to base the event on the Yellow Brick Road from the Wizard of Oz. Whilst having a vision can be the easy part turning that vision into a tangible reality is always the difficult bit! That is

where the range of skills available to us from across the teams came up trumps. People came together in an excellent example of coproduction and playing to your strengths. Everybody felt part of the process by participating in a range of different ways. Some people brought their artistic skills to the front, in designing and planning how it should look, whilst others were willing helpers in turning those designs into a finished product.

The team created a visual journey that highlighted the achievements of all the work over the last three years, as well as start the next process; identifying the journey we will need to undertake over the next three years. Managers, staff, volunteers and participants were enabled and encouraged to play their part in making it a real celebration.

People who attended the event enjoyed the way that the story had been laid out for them to explore and engage with; from looking at the family tree which showed all of the staff involved over the years, following the map to find the different highlighted tables, being able to participate in the drama session and speak up group, and also sharing their thoughts and ideas right across the rainbow.

They also enjoyed the chance to take part in the treasure hunt and talk to Dorothy and the Wizard of Oz themselves, who both made personal appearances, accompanied by the scarecrow, the tin man and the lion!

All in all, everyone involved in the day had a fun and informative time, as demonstrated in all the very positive feedback given to the team.

Hello my name is Nick Howorth and I'm a volunteer for Inclusion Gloucestershire on the Newsletter.

I've volunteered since November with Amanda, as the Editor for the Newsletter and am really enjoying being part of a team.

I also volunteer for Citizens Advice, and I get a lot of self-satisfaction and a sense of achievement with both organisations.

My first event being face to face with you all was the Celebration event which I was very impressed to see so many of you attending. I'm really looking forward to the next events as they come up.



Hello!

Nicks Thoughts on our Celebration Event

It was a joy to attend the recent Project Celebration Event which was very well attended and very welcoming with Tim and Ailsa greeting everyone at the start.

It was nice to get to know people as I am new to the organisation. This celebration provided the opportunity to build new friendships, take time to talk to people, and to meet other volunteers who I look forward to working alongside in the future.

I want to acknowledge everybody that made me feel welcome and thank you to all that helped get the event up and running smoothly.

Nick Howorth
Newsletter Editor

Introducing:



Jake - Research Volunteer

My role at Inclusion Gloucestershire is to support in researching the news about disability and disability focused projects. The information that I gather helps to inform potential collaborative partnerships, projects to help those with disabilities and an understanding of what is already happening in local communities and around the UK.

Volunteering with Inclusion is helping to develop my knowledge and experience of research-based work which I am focusing on to help me to move towards employment.

Daniel – Peer Mentor Trainee



'My name is Daniel, and I am a Peer Mentor Trainee with Inclusion Gloucestershire.

I also like to attend and contribute to the Speak Up Groups including at the Gloucester Hub and the National Star College.

I am looking forward to developing my skills and friendships with Inclusion Gloucestershire further.'

Andrea Riga is Celebrating 8 Years at Inclusion Gloucestershire!



I have recently celebrated my 8 year work anniversary. It is a privilege to work for an amazing organisation like Inclusion Gloucestershire. I had a career change later in life in my early 50s.

In March 2020, lockdown hit, at that time I was employed on the brilliant Quality Checking team, where I had a journey to learn new skills and utilise my transferable skills.

A new opportunity, at Inclusion Gloucestershire, was on the horizon to develop and deliver Advocacy. I was landed my dream job as an Advocate and Peer Mentor in August 2020. I had to embrace a new way of working from home, using virtual Zoom and Teams meetings. I felt that with my lived experience, knowledge, and problem-solving skills I could do this role.

I was fortunate to have had support in the past to reach my goals in life. I wanted to give back the support I received to help others that I have benefitted from the past. I understood the difficulties trying to navigate resources and being listened to. Sometimes we all need a helping hand to advocate.

Andrea Riga



It can be daunting finding the right support when people are experiencing challenges and barriers faced in their daily life. That is why having people with lived experience can be an asset to the organisation and keep professionals in the community.

We learn from each other's lived experience to deliver and develop our work at Inclusion Gloucestershire.

Over the past 3 years I have supported clients on a 1 to 1 basis with multiple issues related to disabilities or mental health. I would work alongside a client, and sometime professionals, to advocate and explore how to support the client to reach their goals. We can signpost / refer clients to other organisations and professionals that is more appropriate and focused based on their issues.

It was, and still is, my mission to support and guide people who have a range of disabilities or mental health issues. Working for Inclusion Gloucestershire I have learnt, personally grown and have changed my own life for the better.

Neurodivergent mentors wanted for the Zig Zag Project



Are you neurodivergent? Would you like to use your own experience to support other newly-identified neurodivergent adults in Gloucestershire?

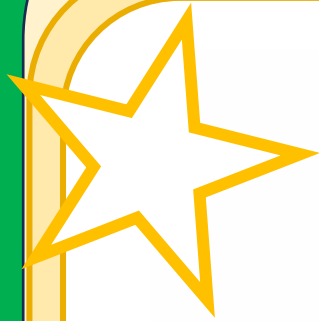
The ZIG/ZAG Peer Mentoring Scheme offers free, 1-to-1 support to people who have recently discovered their own neurodivergence, matching them with experienced volunteer mentors who can offer empathetic support and solidarity as they explore and reflect upon this important aspect of their identity.

We will be recruiting three cohorts of volunteer mentors over the course of the project. We are now recruiting the first cohort of mentors, who will each be trained up and matched with a mentee by February 2024.

To be a ZIG/ZAG mentor, you just need to identify as neurodivergent - you don't need a clinical diagnosis of any specific form/type of neurodivergence. All mentors will receive comprehensive training and ongoing support throughout each 6-month mentoring period, so you also don't have to be an expert!

If you are at a stage in your own journey where you feel ready to support others, we would love to hear from you, please follow the link below to learn about the project and register your interest: [Peer mentoring – ZIG/ZAG \(zigzagproject.uk\)](https://zigzagproject.uk)

Join Us as a MHELO Volunteer!



MHELO

MENTAL HEALTH EXPERIENCE LED OPPORTUNITIES

If you have lived experience of using mental health services, and can share your experiences with others, to help improve local services, we would love to hear from you.

Please email: lisah@inclusion-glos.org
for more details on getting involved.

Ethan's Places To Go



My Recommendations:

Hello everyone here is my photo of me in Disneyland Paris.

I went on the rides at Disneyland Paris and did see the fireworks at Disney Stars on Parade, and I did enjoy myself at Disneyland Paris.

I have chosen these things because they are indoors and low cost:

Treasure Seekers Disco

116 Eastgate Street
Gloucester

Monday and Thursday

19:00pm - 20:30pm

Entrance fee £3.00

Galaxy Club

Ryeleaze Youth Centre

Ryeleaze Road, Stroud

Wednesdays

18:30pm -20:30pm

Up to 25 years old only

Entrance fee £1

Zumba Fitness Class

Eastington Community
Centre, Eastington

Entrance fee £5

Monday 18.15pm

Approx 1 hour

I also went to **Gloucester Services** yesterday with my mummy for my lunch, it is okay.

Best wishes from Ethan
Cookson

Useful Contacts and Where to Find Us!

If you would like to use our advocacy service and share an important issue that we might be able to help you with, please contact our Advocacy team:

advocacy@inclusion-glos.org / t) 01452 234003.

PALs - 0800 0151 548

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Victim Support - 0808 281 0112

POhWER - 0300 456 2370

Advocacy Services Gloucestershire

CAB – 0808 189 6280

Citizens Advice Bureau

CASA - 01452 317460

Community Autism Support & Advice

GL Communities - 01452 505544

Advice & Resource Centre / Matson – Gloucester

Inclusion Gloucestershire has moved to:

Railway House, Bruton Way, Gloucester, GL1 1DG. As we are currently busy settling in, please do contact us in advance if you would like to visit.

Tel: 01452 234003 / Email: info@inclusion-glos.org



**With acknowledgement and thanks to our
Advocacy teams Partners:**

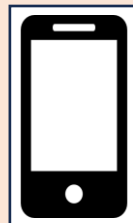
Access Social Care, Building Circles, Cheltenham Borough Homes, Gloucestershire Constabulary, Gloucestershire University, Leonard Cheshire, National Star College, Novalis Trust and Severn Wye Warm and Well.

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