

Volunteer & Advocacy NEWSLETTER

Issue 4 2024

A great time was had by all recently as our Gloucester hub members celebrated at their Christmas party and a team of volunteers readily helped out by serving food to party goers.



Alan, Dawn & Deborah at the Gloucester Hub

Others offered drinks and ensured everyone enjoyed the crisp tasting challenge! Volunteers including Caroline handed out sweets and fruit, all demonstrating close friendships, with the common connection of fun and laughter.



Also in this issue:

FREE and cost saving places to go over Christmas!



NEW film launch to challenge unhelpful assumptions about disability!

Save the Date!
Important Speak Up events coming soon!



In the picture: Caroline sharing sweets.

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GLOUCESTERSHIRE

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Allied Health Professionals Career Carousel Day – November 2024

Faye Longley, Advocacy Coordinator

Many of you will know that, as well as being Advocacy Coordinator for Inclusion Gloucestershire, I am also a qualified Occupational Therapist and I work 2 days a week at Paradise House, a residential care setting for adults with learning disabilities.

I was approached by the University of Gloucestershire and asked to come along to their Career Carousel Day, an event for Occupational Therapy students at the University, to get some ideas of where they would like their careers to go, once they qualify as an Occupational Therapist.



I was asked to attend in my capacity of Advocacy Coordinator, as this role, although not a traditional Occupational Therapy role, does use a lot of the skills that I learned during my Occupational Therapy degree and use daily in my Occupational Therapy role.

I was given a table next to some colleagues from Novalis Trust, which covers Paradise House, so I was able to promote both roles.

It was a really interesting afternoon, and it was great to meet so many up-and-coming Occupational Therapists, as well as some students from Gloucestershire College who were there to see what options were available to them once they have finished their college courses.

I gave out several leaflets promoting our advocacy services and the general organisation, and also had some interest from people in our volunteer placement offer.

Thanks go to the University of Gloucestershire for inviting me to this event, and also to Jackie Rowe, for allowing me to take the time out of our busy team to attend.





From left to right Ethan, Nick, Amanda and Elisabeth

Newsletter Team

By Amanda, Volunteer
Co-ordinator

Our First Get Together as a Team

It was an absolute joy to be a part of our first whole team get together recently. The newsletter team has grown, and it was wonderful to share what everyone's contributions mean to them and to discuss how everyone would like to collaborate in the new year.

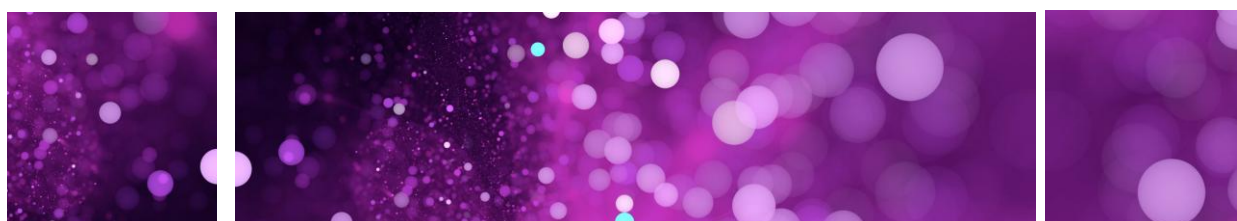
'I like meeting
new friends.'

'Learning new skills and
helping out.'

'I enjoy helping
people out.'

Ethan, Nick and Elisabeth also shared some of their achievements including content creating, researching for the newsletter and creating articles that will help people.

We look forward to providing interesting content in 2025 and are always happy to hear your suggestions, so that this newsletter is always a valuable resource.



Christmas Day Open Spaces

Free places to go ♦ Warm spaces ♦ Reduced costs ♦
Free Christmas meals.



By: Elisabeth Wall

“In September a study estimated 38 per cent of 16 to 29-year-olds said they felt lonely often, always or some of the time, followed by 27 per cent of 30 to 49-year-olds, 24 per cent of 50 to 69-year-olds and 19 per cent aged over 70”.

<https://www.whatsonlive.co.uk/warwickshire/news/attractions-for-those-feeling-lonely-this-christmas/61985>

With this in mind, for people who are feeling lonely and / or isolated over Christmas, why not visit:

Cheltenham Open Door: Unit 3, St George's Business Park, Alstone Lane, Cheltenham GL51 8HF.

This is open to guests at their Hub on Alstone Lane between 9am and 6pm on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

There will be three free meals a day served along with treats, snacks and drinks in between.



Fairford Christmas Day Lunch
Fairford Community Centre, GL7 4AF.

For individuals and couples from Fairford and surrounding villages, including Lechlade.

Starts at 1:30pm to 3:30pm, with a suggested donation of £5.

Smiles Café - Feed The Hungry
24, The Oxbode, Gloucester, GL1 1SA.

Are offering full English Breakfasts for free, along with treats, on Christmas Day from 7:30am to 9:30.

For the homeless and vulnerable.



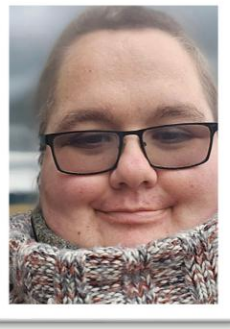
Trinity Rooms Field Road, Stroud
GL5 2HZ: Christmas Day Fun &
Community Meal.

Pay only what you can.

1pm – 3pm Roast Dinner
(vegan option).

3pm – 5:30pm games, quiz and
Christmas fun.

Winter Warmers



By: Elisabeth Wall

If you're looking for a low-cost warming bite this festive season, why not visit:








Morrisons (Metz Way): If you visit Morrisons Café they are offering free refills on their self-serve hot drinks after the first purchase, or if you fancy a sweet treat for £4, have a slice of cake and a hot drink, and benefit from the free refills of hot drinks!

JD Wetherspoon's including: The Lord High Constable of England & The Regal, Gloucester: If a hot beverage is purchased for £1.56 you can have free refills throughout the day.



Asda Gloucester (Bruton Way): are offering a "Winter Warmer" where those over 60 can have a roll, bowl of soup and unlimited refills of tea or coffee for £1. Available until the end of February 2025. Soup choice includes: Tomato, Chicken and Vegetable!

Festive Fun!

-  What do they sing at a snowman's birthday party?
Freeze a jolly good fellow!
-  What do you get when you cross a snowman with a vampire? Frostbite.
-  What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney?
Claus-trophobia!
-  How do Christmas trees get their email? They log-on!
-  What is green, covered in Christmas lights and Christmas bulbs, and goes ribbit? A mistle-toad.
-  What do snowmen eat for breakfast? Ice crispies.
-  What's every elf's favourite type of music? Wrap!





The Zig Zag Peer Mentoring project began in June 2023. It is a 2-year project funded by Barnwood Trust, which is piloting a peer mentoring program for neurodivergent adults living in Gloucestershire. It is a project designed by Liz Bell, and it also works with a company called Free2BMe.

The project team has been very busy as the project has developed.

Here are some key facts about the project:

- We have trained 22 Zig Zag volunteer peer mentors
- We have met with 31 people interested in being mentored
- There has been so much interest in having a neurodivergent peer mentor that we unfortunately have quite a long waiting list
- We have matched 16 pairs of peer mentors and mentees so far but there will be more matches soon with our new cohort of peer mentors
- As our cohort 1, comes to its end, 7 of our volunteer peer mentors have asked to be paired with a new mentee
- Since our first pair met in May, there have been more than 105 different meet ups
- We have just trained our last cohort of volunteer peer mentors and are excited to pair and introduce our new mentees and mentors.

Ethan's Places To Go



Ethan enjoying some Autumn sun.

October and November have been filled with memorable moments, from exploring Bath to enjoying a holiday in Woolacombe in North Devon. On holiday, I enjoyed using the hot tub and going to the Neo Cinema to watch Paddington in Peru.

Later in the month of October, I attended a lively party at the Long Table with James, Malcolm, and friends. It was a wonderful evening of dancing, laughter and a delicious dinner.

There are two Long Tables, one in Cirencester and one in Stroud, where I visited. This is at Brimscombe Mills, Brimscombe Hill, Brimscombe, Stroud GL5 2QN. You can sit on a bench with other people or sit at tables that are a bit quieter. It is busy, but spacious too.



The food is healthy and there is something for everyone. The Long Table is about coming together as a community, eating together, and paying what you can, so that everyone can join in. Here is the link to find out more: <https://thelongtableonline.com>

Over the following few days, I made wonderful memories with an adorable French Bulldog puppy called Opal. Animals really do make you happy.

I hope that everyone has a lovely Christmas and New Year!

Dramatic Change

Exciting news!

Our **NEW** drama film

'**Assumptions**' is out now.

You can [watch it on our YouTube channel](#)



The film was created by our Gloucester Drama Group and the stories used in the film are all based on the lived experiences of the drama members, colleagues and other individuals who face disabling barriers in our community. The aim of the film is to challenge unhelpful assumptions about disability.

Some of our members acted in the film, while others were part of the filming crew. We also had some additional actors come and join us for the filming day. It was a truly collaborative project and a great achievement by the group.

Please **watch** and **share** the film. We want as many people as possible to hear our message!

<https://www.youtube.com/@inclusiongloucestershire6831/videos>

Coming Up in 2025

There are also more productions currently being created. The drama and group advocacy teams are working closely together again, making exciting plans for a new project next year. Housing is a key issue for lots of our members, so will most likely be our next focus.

A new film course has started at The Grange in the Forest of Dean. Members have been exploring what it means to "have a voice". They will be developing their creative and technical skills as they coproduce their own film about this over the next few months.

The Gloucester group have started working on their next production. They have been exploring the benefits and challenges of using the internet. This time they are planning a live performance! We look forward to sharing more details about both new productions soon.

The team have also been busy delivering Creative Mindfulness and Content Creators courses this term and are currently planning new courses for the new year. Please get in touch if you would like to know more about any of our offers or productions. You can call the office or email: drama@inclusion-glos.org





Project Highlights

One of our MHELO volunteers created a short film 'Do you see me or my Diagnosis.'

The film shared her experience of mental health stigma due to her diagnosis of Schizophrenia and the positive impact voluntary and paid work has had on her.

This film was released for National Schizophrenia Awareness Day on 25 July, and can be viewed on the Inclusion Gloucestershire's YouTube channel here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wUeWeyTgk-k&list=PLEbBS9Ttf9qftSxcF01ES3UcjwsRsS4je&ab_channel=InclusionGloucestershire

If you would like to join our MHELO network to find out more about what we are doing, please sign up to our membership page or follow us on social media here:

<https://www.inclusiongloucestershire.co.uk/engagement/mhe-lo-mental-health-expert-led-opportunities/>

<https://www.facebook.com/mhelogloucestershire/>

A number of our volunteers are involved in the advisory group for the mental health clinical programme group (CPG).

■ The CPG's in Gloucestershire design the way health care is delivered in Gloucestershire. Our volunteers play an important role in sharing views and experiences from a lived experience perspective so that services are coproduced.

In the last quarter we have shared information about people's experience of:

■ Challenges in accessing mental health services from individuals belonging to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) community.

■ Stopping or reducing antidepressants. We found that people had varied levels of support and information to stop or reduce antidepressants and limited non-medical support options identified.

■ Following this we gave feedback on a patient information leaflet which will be used in Gloucestershire to support people to have better access to information if they wish to stop or reduce antidepressant medication.



Jackie's Winter Survival Tips.



By Jackie Sallis

Like many people I struggle with my mental health during the winter months. So here are a few tips that I find helps me cope during these cold bleak times.

1. I try to get as much natural sunlight as possible. For example, I like to sit by a window and watch the birds and squirrels outside or have a wander in the garden so that I get enough vitamin D.
2. I make sure I stay connected with others. Even if the weather is bad, I will pick up the phone and have a friendly natter with friends or family. I also keep a list of helplines to ring such as the crisis team or other people in my network such as my friends in MHELO.
3. I try to eat a balanced diet with lots of fruit, pasta, vegetables etc. I also make sure that I have my flu and covid vaccines, so that my physical health is protected because if my physical health goes down, it affects my mental health directly.
4. I make sure that I get enough sleep, as if I don't, I'm irritable and grumpy.
5. Finally, I try to stay in the moment and practice mindfulness and relaxation.



By Nick Howorth



Something to consider for the New Year!

Holidays For Disabled People With Any Disability

One of the holidays I've been to is Odyssians Camp in Hampshire. I first heard about the camp from a friend at Leonard Cheshire who goes every year. Odyssians is for disabled people with any disability.

First the holiday maker has to apply by filling out the application form online by going to their website. If the holiday maker is successful then they'll be asked to pay to secure their place and are asked to bring clothing to fit all weather.

Before the holiday there will be an email about the final night, which is party night.

The holiday maker is asked to sign in to let everyone know that they have arrived and is shown to their bed, then the holiday makers are set and ready to have fun.

There is a nurse who helps the holiday maker, as well as several volunteers that are prepared to help with any task, and nothing is too hard as they're very accommodating. All medication is to be given to them, and they will be dosing out when the holiday maker usually has it.

The accommodation is marquees with a set of beds and the holiday maker is asked to bring bedding, either a sleeping bag or duvet and your pillows. The holiday maker isn't expected to be there before the set time because the volunteers have to set up the camp and have a look around the camp to know where things are. Basically, the holiday maker will be sleeping in groups of 6-8 people within the marquee.

The first evening meal is prepared and served by the chefs. After dinner there is time to chat with other holiday makers and make friendships, and going to bed is when the holiday maker wishes.

The following morning breakfast is either cooked, or cereal and toast. After breakfast when everything is cleared, and all chores are completed the fun starts!

There is a group meeting to find out what the activities will be on that day within each group. There are different activities each day, and one day out somewhere locally of interest.

To get involved, research Odyssians on the internet if you'd like to apply: <https://www.odyssians.com> (Surrey campsite) I enjoyed being out in the fresh air and being around people to make new friends with.

SAVE THE DATE!

2025!



Join our friendly, inclusive forums where people come together to share their thoughts and be heard on issues of importance to them. Save the date, more details to follow soon!



SPEAK UP GROUPS

Monday 27th Jan
1.30pm – 3.00pm

Focus Group – Results of
the Big Survey 2024

Weds 12th / 19th Feb – 2.00pm – 3.30pm

Focus Group 2 – Results of the Big Survey -
location tbc

Tuesday 25th Feb – time tbc

Big Housing – in collaboration with the Drama
Team at Inclusion Gloucestershire

If you would like to express your interest or be added to the distribution list for future Speak Up dates and times, please email: advocacy@inclusion-glos.org or phone us on: t) 01452 234003.

Useful Contacts



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



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 (for over 18's) from 6pm to 11pm every night.

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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.

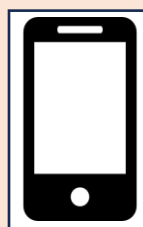
From April this year we supported 10 people with 1:1 advocacy needs and 84 people accessed group advocacy. 28 people have benefited through volunteering in the organisation and 5 people have benefited from volunteering as peer mentors. Recent figures showed that 478 people have already seen our new films or productions created through this project, making a positive impact on the lives of disabled people.

Follow us!

Facebook



Instagram



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