



Working for Choice, Independence & Lifestyle

Wiltshire Independent NEWSLETTER

Issue 51

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Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living

info@wiltshirecil.org.uk

0300 1233 442

Such challenging and difficult times it has been for everyone. Many of you, our service users, have commented that actually, this is how life has been for you in terms of feeling isolated and cut off from your community prior to lockdown. We have for some time strived to change this so that everyone feels valued and can contribute in a way that is best for you. Wiltshire CIL continues to keep the people we support at the heart of all we do. We have listened to what you tell us and how best we can support you through such difficult times.

In late March we had to abide by the Government guidelines and swiftly put measures in place so that staff could work from home. It was so important now more than ever that we could reassure people of our continued support through this period. We are proud of the way our team has adapted to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19. Our team has actively and enthusiastically risen to the challenge to deliver effective support to service users. This includes working alongside people to understand how your support is individualised to you. We have re-framed the way our service is delivered to work effectively for people during the crisis, ensuring regular wellbeing phone calls, organising food shopping and prescription delivery.

We learned new expressions like 'Zoom', 'PPE' and 'furloughing'. The DP team had to quickly learn to navigate this complicated and previously unknown mine field of furloughing and Job Retention Schemes. All credit is due to them as they admirably supported PA's through this process to ensure individual employers maintained their packages of care through this difficult period.

Our offices remained open throughout lockdown to ensure we could dispense PPE to people in receipt of direct payments so that their personal care was continued without the added fear of accessing the right PPE. We worked with Wiltshire Council to ensure everyone on a direct payment was supported to have their care package so that it was not affected.

We have worked with partner organisations in the voluntary and public sector throughout the lockdown and will continue to do so as we enter into what is being termed the 'new normal'.

We are concerned about the use of the term 'vulnerable', as people do not always self-identify with this. The future direction needs to be driven by people with lived experience. There is an opportunity to work with the public sector to build on the strengths of local communities but more importantly, to learn from the experiences of people in receipt of services who continue to find innovative ways of surviving lockdown. These are the opportunities we will embrace in the coming 12 months, to ensure the voice of people we support remains paramount in all we do.

In a post COVID 19 world there are likely to be challenges to overcome, but we are confident that our robust services will support us to continue to deliver better, stronger services for those who need them most. Read on to hear about some of the new work we are delivering.

Geraldine Bentley–CEO

Direct Payments

PAs returning to work during COVID-19–Guidance for Employers

If you have been shielding or self-isolating and asked your PAs not to come into work, or if your PA has been shielding or self-isolating because of their own needs or those of a family member, you may now be starting to think about how you can support your PAs to return to work and feel they are in a safe environment. Information about this has been sent out with the July payroll to all employers and is also available on our [website](#).



Important Information

Wiltshire CIL Payroll

Over the next few months, Payroll are carrying out a further improvement to their service by setting up an HMRC Inland Revenue inbox for each employer. This allows Payroll to act on the employer's behalf to obtain tax code amendments and to deal with any PAYE queries direct online. Payroll will advise each employer as they make the application. The employer will then receive a letter from HMRC within the following 7 days. This will contain a code which must be passed to Payroll straightaway as it has an expiry date.

COVID-19

There's a lot of useful information in the Covid-19 section on our [website](#).

User Engagement

Keeping in touch during Covid 19

Our recently published Life Under Lockdown report highlighted being connected with others has been the key thing that has helped during the lockdown. People have told us about how much more they are talking to their neighbours and how communities have become more friendly.

"people are talking to each other more"

The experience of people who have been shielding has been different, with access to technology playing a key role. People told us how important social media, text messaging and online groups were in keeping in touch with friends and family.

"through zoom... by WhatsApp"

"weekly quiz on skype so we can see each other and interact with each other"



zoom



skype™

Some people have gained new skills during the lockdown. One lady recently told us how she has learnt how to use YouTube and joined online church services. This led to learning how to download and use Apps such as BBC iplayer. She now has an email address and when confident with this plans to join in zoom meetings to continue working with Wiltshire CIL online forums.



Get Active in Wiltshire!

If you are a person with a disability who has been shielding or isolating during Covid19 and you are struggling to find motivation to get active following the lockdown period or you would like to try something new and become more physically active — then contact us to find out about how we can work with you to get active in Wiltshire!

We can work with you on a 1-1 basis and support you to get active in your community and to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

We will support you as an individual, creating ideas with you about how you would like to get active.

To get involved contact Louise:

louiseh@wiltshirecil.org.uk

0300 1233 442

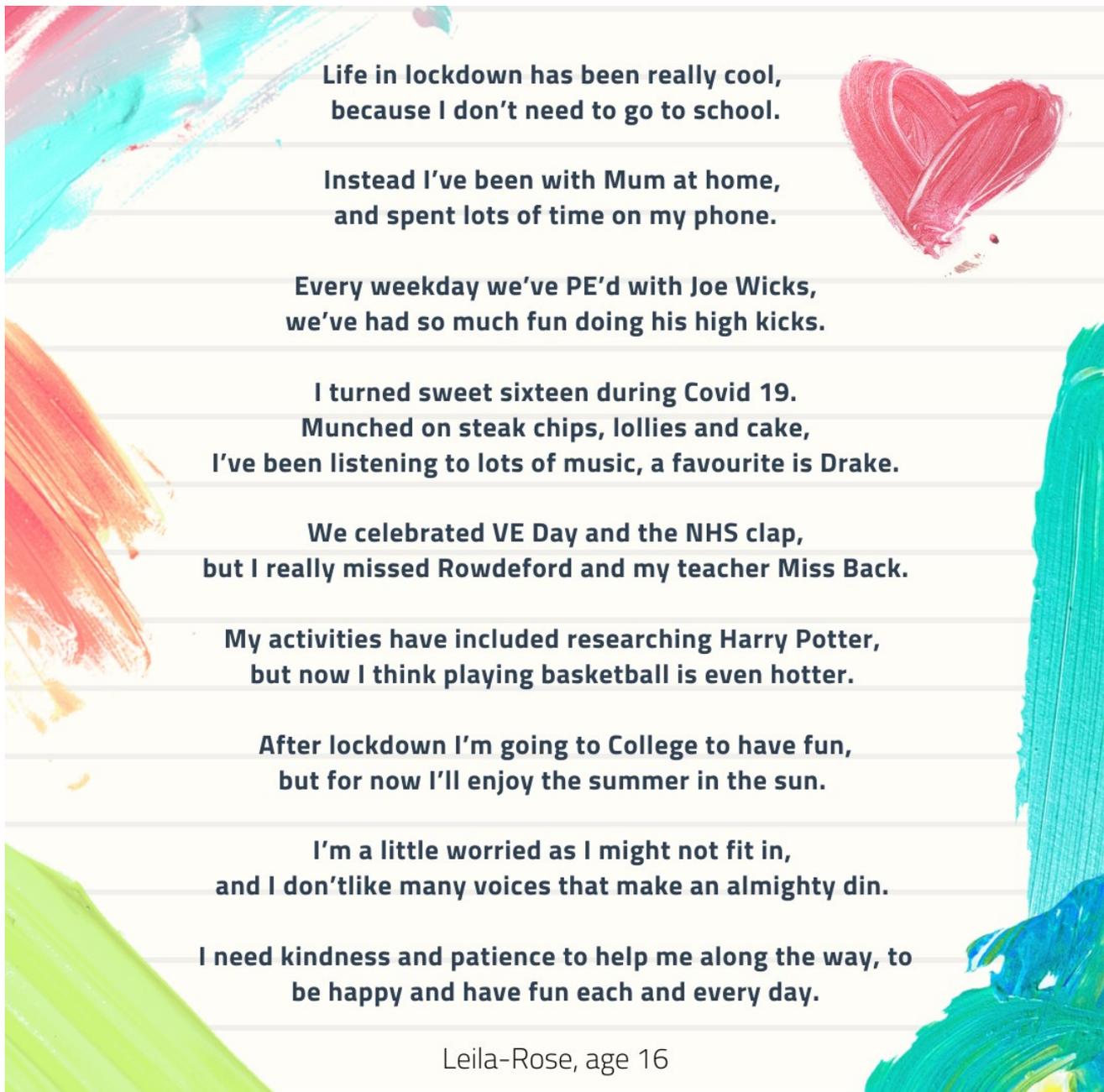
[@wiltscil](#) / www.facebook.com/WiltshireCIL



Young, Disabled: Lockdown and My Future

We wanted to hear from 16-25-year olds, about their experiences in lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic. Their hopes for the future and what support they would need to make that happen - They are the future!

Here is a brilliant poem by Leila - Rose, aged 16, who wanted to share what it had been like for her.



The project showed, young disabled people had very different experiences and feelings from one another.

Learning Disability Knowledge Café Newsletter

The latest edition of the Learning Disability Knowledge Café Newsletter is here, and it is looking at Covid-19 recovery planning. Wiltshire Council are starting to look at the future following Covid-19 and to plan how services and support will look.

It is really important that you are able to have your say and share your views so that you can help develop and shape Wiltshire's recovery planning.

We would really like to hear about your views and your experiences of Covid-19, how your life has been affected and how you see the future.

We have designed this newsletter so that it you can fill it in, give your views and send it back to us by 31st August 2020. You can view the newsletter [here](#).

Voices of Disability

The User Engagement Team has been running a series on our @listenupwilts Instagram page called Voices of Disability. The campaign raises awareness of disability by sharing lots of different local disabled people's photos and sharing their voices and messages about disability.

To see all of the Voices of Disability posts follow us on Instagram - @listenupwilts
Here is an example:



VOICES OF DISABILITY



Hey, my name is Pat. I have a spinal cord injury (c3 & c4) which affects all 4 limbs. I use a wheelchair indoors and a mobility scooter to get about outdoors. I love all sports, especially motorsport which has always been a part of my life, and sailing. I've been sailing at Whitefriars Sailing Club for a few years. I love the freedom and control it gives me out on the water. It gives me that independence sensation I felt before my injury. I had no knowledge prior and I'm so glad I've taken the opportunity to try it. I also enjoy graphic design & blogging. Even though I may not be able to physically do what I did before, I'm able to do better things I'd of never done if I didn't have this disability. I'm a far more focused, knowledgeable and better person than I was. There are no limits in life, only the limits we place in our minds.

 @listenupwilts


ListenUp
Wiltshire
www.listenupwilts.org.uk

To get involved email: userengagement@wiltshirecil.org.uk a photo of yourself and your answer to these questions:

- 1. Your name**
- 2. What do you love to do; and**
- 3. One thing that you want people to know about disability/life with a disability.**

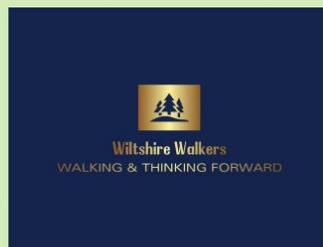
#MakeSomeoneWelcome



A massive welcome to our newest

#MakeSomeoneWelcome

sign ups



@ListenUpWilts

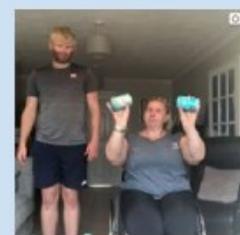


September is **#MonthOfMovement** on our Instagram page **@listenupwilts**.

We are posting an inclusive exercise idea everyday.

There is a whole team of people lined up to demonstrate each exercise including some Paralympians!

Check out **@listenupwilts** and join in!



HIU Service



Jessie's Story

In February I met Jessie. Jessie told me about how she used to have an active life, she had physically demanding job and she was raising her 2 kids. She was a carer and she also volunteered for St Johns Ambulance. This showed me how caring and kind Jessie is, but at this point she couldn't see this.

At first Jessie could only see the things she thought were wrong with her. Due to her health conditions she had to give up her job and ended up spending most of her time in her home which wasn't suitable for her wheelchair. Jessie would refer to herself as wearing a mask to cover up how she really felt.

We met 3 times before Jessie spent some time in hospital. Whilst she was in hospital it was decided that Jessie would go into a placement as her home wasn't a suitable place for her to be. I visited Jessie in hospital and continued to speak to her on a daily basis on the phone. Even though Jessie wasn't in the right place at that moment in time to think about moving forward, I still wanted her to know I was there and ready for when she was. I wanted Jessie to know she wasn't on her own and that she had someone alongside her.

Soon after this Jessie was discharged home due to the Coronavirus situation, Jessie didn't feel ready for this, so we upped our phone calls to sometimes 3 times a day. We would facetime occasionally, and we even played online games together to keep her mind focused. We changed my support to whatever she needed at that time, it was completely Jessie led.

Throughout lockdown Jessie had 5 more instances in hospital, each time she came home we would debrief about it, we would talk about what could have happened differently and what she could do for herself. From this Jessie came up with fantastic ideas on how to cope, she created herself an emergency box filled with all the things she enjoys doing. She created a list of contacts she could speak to and when they were available.

We continued to chat on the phone about how she feels and what she wants to aim for. Jessie found it difficult to know what she wanted and couldn't plan for anything further than hour by hour.

The conversations Jessie and I had were always open and honest, Jessie was able to be herself on the phone and talk about the things that mattered to her. Some days we had happy conversations about the progress Jessie was making and some days Jessie wanted to talk about the things that bothered her. Each phone call we would reflect back, we would find the positives or look for different points of view.

Slowly Jessie started to change the way she thought about things. Jessie said to me once that she still didn't feel like she had been a mum but then she corrected herself, she said actually I have been doing some things without realising. We talked about the big progression she made, even just correcting herself let alone the bits she had done. Jessie said she felt like she had progressed over the last couple of weeks.

Jessie started to understand that she was responsible for her happiness and taking control. This was the start of Jessies behaviour changes. Sometimes this was scary and naturally some barriers would go up or she would have times of self-doubt. Each time we would talk about it and it was always left up to her on how she wanted to proceed.

Jessie made a brave decision to change her life, in her opinion for the better and she did all this whilst I was on annual leave. Jessie had the belief in herself and took the steps she needed to take control of her life. When I came back from leave, it was like Jessie was a completely different person. She told me she was proud of herself for what she had done but said she did this because she knew she had support behind her.

By this time Lockdown was easing and we were able to meet, Jessie told me her mask had gone.

Jessie has now started to do exercises around the house which has built up her walking. She said she is now able to look to the future and feels positive. Jessie speaks about taking control of her medical appointments and not missing one.

Jessie would not have made these changes if I told her to, she needed to come to this decision on her own, in her own time. I walked alongside Jessie, I didn't fix anything or do anything for her.

Community Project

Tales from the Town *Celebrating Strength in the Community*

This summer, Wiltshire CIL has secured funding from the National Lottery to co-ordinate a project exploring the stories and lived experiences of the people in Devizes during lockdown. The aim is to build on the amazing kindness, neighbourliness, and community support shown in our town to create a mutually supportive recovery. To ensure we construct not just a “new normal” but a better normal, where everyone feels welcome. Now that we’ve all had a taste of isolation, it’s our chance as we come out of it to make sure no-one feels isolated in anyway by society’s response to their different abilities or needs.

We have appointed Annabel Lake as Community Partnership Facilitator to facilitate this project, and the project will be co-produced with the story tellers themselves. She already has a team of story guides on board to help steer the project as it moves forward with collecting the experiences of many more Devizes citizens, particularly those who have been shielding or always lived through some form of isolation. As means of celebrating the community response and any lessons we have learnt through this experience, they will co-create an event and some artwork. Beyond celebration of the kindness of our neighbours and volunteers, through sharing these “Tales from the Town”, it is hoped that those who have felt not just physically, but social and emotionally isolated, can take strength in hearing that others have been through similar experiences.

It is with the help of these story guides that they have come up with the title “Tales From the Town: Celebrating Strength in the Community”, and we hope to hear and share many more stories soon.



Staff News

We have welcomed the following staff members to our team:



Mia O'Sullivan
HIU Community
Connector



Donna Cook
HIU Community
Connector



Amanda Stuart
Melksham PCN
Community



Lorraine Hinder
Payroll
Administrator



Nicola Humpage
Trowbridge PCN
Community



Annabel Lake
Community
Partnership



Louise Hunt
Community
Engagement



Jan Forsyth
North Wilts PCN
Community



Hannah Webster
Sarum West PCN
Community

During the next month we will also be welcoming:

Liz Denbury – Calne PCN Community Connector

Katie Burholt – Chippenham, Calne & Box PCN Community Connector

Lynda Lester – Direct Payment Finance Team Manager

Moira Conroy – Melksham PCN Older People's Community Connector

Natasha Parkin – HIU Community Connector (Maternity cover)

Congratulations.... Good Luck ... Goodbye...



... to Abbie-Jo Lawrence (Development Outreach Worker & Trainer), who had a baby girl on the 22nd July 2020: Jorgie Lynne



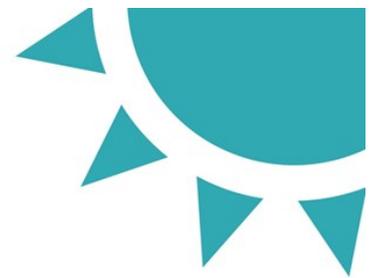
... to Louise Hunt (Community Engagement Worker) on her recent engagement



...to Poppy Witts-Woodward (HIU Community Connector) who is expecting her first baby and taking maternity leave from mid-October.



... a very sad goodbye to Caroline Finch, Direct Payment Operations Manager, on her retirement at the end of October. She has been an integral part of the Wilts CIL team these last 6 years and will be greatly missed.



Get Out Get Active (GOGA) is an exciting programme that supports disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy being active together. It is made possible by the founding funder [Spirit of 2012](#) and additional investment from [Sport England](#) and the [London Marathon Charitable Trust](#). All partners are focused on getting some of the UK's least active people moving more through fun and inclusive activities.

GOGA goes far beyond increasing activity levels, it strengthens community spirit, increases confidence and improves mental health. The programme increases the demand for, and the accessibility of, activities. The success of which has been tapping into people's real life motivations and applying Activity Alliance's [Talk to Me Principles](#) to get more people active.

Experiences During Covid 19

For one week in May we undertook a quick fire survey to get a snapshot of what life was like for disabled people and their families in lockdown. The report is available on our [website](#) and below are the key messages from that report.

Key Messages:

- The lockdown has presented several practical issues associated with shopping and maintaining formal care
- 61% of people who responded are feeling isolated and lonely and the restrictions imposed are having a significant impact on people's wellbeing. This is especially true for parent carers.
- People are relying on their families for support and connection rather than accessing the Covid-19 community groups, voluntary organisations, or Wiltshire Council

The survey has been used both locally and nationally to inform practice and policy, and evidence from it has even been used by the parliamentary select committee.

It is great to have Wiltshire people's voices heard!

Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living

COVID-19 Information Pack:

We have a wealth of information available on our website—please follow the links below:

- Wiltshire CIL letter to Direct Payment Employers
- Planning for coronavirus (COVID-19) : Letter for Direct Payment Users from Wiltshire Council
- Advice for PAs: Information for Personal Assistants working with Vulnerable People in the Community
- What you can do to be prepared (Updated 26.03.2020)
- Coronavirus Emergency Plan for Home
- Example Key Worker Letter for Employers (Updated 26.03.2020)
- Key Worker ID Document
- Obtaining Isolation Notes
- Questions and Answers for Social Care (COVID-19) Source: Social Care Institute for Excellence
- Fish Insurance: Coronavirus - FAQs for those employing carers
- WCIL User Engagement Covid-19 Resources
- Top Tips for PA support during COVID-19
- Where to get help and advice if you have a Direct Payment
- PAs returning to work - Guidance for Employer
- PAs returning to work -Risk Assessment Tool
- UK Government issues 'exemption card' for people unable to wear a face mask

Additional information can be found on our [website page](#)

Please let us know if you need help with any of this information—you can call us on 0300 1233 442 or email info@wiltshirecil.org.uk



Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living ■ 11 Couch Lane ■ Devizes ■ SN10 1EB
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