



Working for Choice, Independence & Lifestyle

Wiltshire Independent NEWSLETTER

Issue 52

APRIL 2021



Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living
info@wiltshirecil.org.uk

0300 1233 442

 hello
spring!



Not only is Spring in the air but we have a spring in our step as we move into the long-awaited end of lockdown. It has been a devastating and challenging time for so many people. The isolation and feelings of loneliness has affected us all in one way or another, but 'hope' is in the air. Hope for a return to a 'normal', full and unabridged return to how as individuals, we want to live our lives in our own way without being told how to or having rules imposed upon us as to how we must live that life.

Countless disabled people have felt isolated from their communities well before the pandemic and for those people their initial response was 'welcome to my world...' For too many people they have always lived their life relying on the responses and terms imposed by others. People who are 'professionals' and 'know best' about how others need to live their lives just because they have a disability, not unlike Boris and his Ministers who currently need to impose the rules on everyone. However, not everyone agreed with those rules and as such expressed their dissatisfaction through various outlets. Many disabled people live by other people's rules right through their lives with little thought given to their right of choice! So those of us who have experienced the pressure of rules in this period and the isolation and lack of human contact that followed as a result.... Think on, about how, for those disabled people they will continue to be at the 'mercy' of the rules made by those who know best, because even in this, the 21st century as we move out of a pandemic and see light at the end of the tunnel, for numerous disabled people that light will always remain illusive. How many of us will continue to empathise with that feeling 12 months on from now.....!

FRIENDSHIP
☆ is the comfort that ☆
comes from knowing that even
when you feel all alone, you aren't.
DOLLIEGRAVE.COM

The communities and friendships forged together throughout the pandemic can continue to grow to support all people. The people who have 'shielded' for so long have much to offer their communities and neighbours and are keen to be involved. So do continue with your good work and read on to see the work that Wiltshire CIL has been involved with in supporting and bringing people together to connect and re-connect within their own communities. After all, it's not rocket science!

Geraldine Bentley—CEO

Direct Payments

Covid 19 Vaccine Rollout

Following the announcement of the national vaccine programme, and the introduction of vaccination centres, Wiltshire CIL worked hard to ensure all PA's employed by disabled people in Wiltshire were recognised as being eligible for the frontline vaccine rollout of social care staff. We rose to the challenge and were able to respond rapidly to give PAs access to the vaccine. Public Health England believe that "it is highly likely that any infection in a vaccinated person will be less severe and that viral shedding will be shortened. We therefore expect that vaccinated health and care staff will be less likely to pass infection to their friends and family and to the vulnerable people that they care for." We were one of the first organisations nationally to have pursued this avenue successfully on behalf of PA's, the majority of whom are now registered and received vaccines.

During February 2021, the Admin Team assisted in the arrangement of Covid-19 vaccinations for **225** PAs in collaboration with Wiltshire Council. From March, PAs were signposted to the NHS Online Booking system.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Since the first Lockdown in March 2020 the Admin Team were able to provide PPE for **173** Direct Payment recipients which was distributed from our offices in Devizes.

March 2020–March 2021



X 6,150



X 32,800



X 1,760

Direct Payments

Our Direct Payment Adviser Team have continued to provide support, advice and guidance to enable people to have confidence in using their Direct Payments during the pandemic as well as having the knowledge of how to be a good employer and support their PAs in the safest and most appropriate way. We continue to have a wide range of useful and up to date information on our [COVID website page](#)

Since September we provided free training sessions to both employers and their PAs. These session have been adapted and moved online - our PA Development

worker is now very proficient with using Zoom! The feedback has been great and there could be a demand for online training to continue, as well as face to face.

Here are some of the popular sessions and the feedback we have received.

Employer Information Sessions:

“Thank you for the Employer Training session this afternoon, I personally got a lot out of it and it flagged up a number of areas that I can improve.”

Infection Control:

“Thank you for clarification on Covid-19, feel more confident now”

Working with LD:

“During the session we talked about drawing on people’s strengths and abilities – I will try to remember this in my work.”

Dementia Awareness:

“I now understand how frustrating it can be for the person that I support – thank you”

Recruitment and Retention for Individual Employers:

“Very good that this support is available over Zoom. I personally find it difficult to attend training and this option was perfect.” “Good to discuss why we are struggling to recruit and finding out more detail on using the PA Register.”

Food Hygiene:

“Thank you to the Trainer – session was easy to understand – I am now going to clean my fridge”

Annual Leave for your employees

All your employees will be entitled to paid holiday whether they work for you full-time or just a few hours every now and again. Everyone will have a holiday entitlement of 5.6 working weeks pro rata (subject to a maximum of 28 working days). It is important you encourage your employees to take their entitlement throughout the year. To help you calculate your employee’s holiday entitlement, take a look at the Holiday Information Sheet available on our website or call us on 0300 1233 442 to request a paper copy.

Payroll & Banking Service

Throughout Covid 19, Wiltshire CIL Payroll and Banking Service has continued to be very busy, processing in excess of 900 payrolls per month and offering help and support to our Service Users with many more of you contacting us with pay queries that have arisen due to the restrictions that Covid, has placed on us all.

Our banking service has also been equally as busy as ever, ensuring that all individuals being paid through payroll and suppliers of care packages, have received payment on time.

Both teams remain committed to providing an excellent service to all our Users' and are always here to help and reassure with regard to pay and banking queries you may have.

There are some employment law changes from April 2021 that will affect your payroll are as follows:

Annual tax free pay allowance increasing from £12500 to £12570 meaning the standard tax code will be 1257L

The 20% basic rate for tax banding increases from £37500 to £37700

The National Insurance weekly earnings limit for employees is £184.00 and £170 for employers

The National Insurance monthly earnings limit for employees is £797.00 and £737 for employers

The National Insurance rate for employees remains at 12% above the earnings limit with Employers paying 13.8%

National Minimum Wage Rates:

Under 18 year olds increases from £4.55 to £4.62 per hour

18-20 year olds increases from £6.45 to £6.56 per hour

21-22 year olds increases from £8.20 to £8.36 per hour

23-24 year olds increases from £8.20 to £8.91 per hour

The National Living Wage from £8.72 (over 25s) to £8.91 (over 23s)

Statutory Rates:

Statutory Sick Pay increases to £96.35 per week

Statutory Maternity/Adoption/Paternity Pay increases to £151.97 per week

User Engagement

Get Active Wiltshire Colin's Story

When I first started working with Colin, he was not getting out much at all and was struggling to find ways to prioritise his own mental and physical health. His health condition meant that he had to learn to walk again which he has successfully done through great determination and patience.

I was put in touch with Colin through one of the Community Connectors as he wanted to start to build up his basic fitness and find productive ways to get out of the house which will help his overall physical and mental well-being.

When we first started working together Colin explained that his muscles felt very weak, especially in his arms and was struggling to do basic daily tasks such as carrying shopping bags.

We spent some time exploring different ideas and possible ways for Colin to become more active. He was interested in swimming but because of the closures due to the pandemic this option just was not viable. After several discussions Colin decided it was cycling, he would like to try. Colin bought himself a bike and has been riding regularly ever since. He has built up the time he spends on his bike gradually and this week for the first time ever he cycled alone, to shops rather than using his mobility scooter which he usually does for this type of daily task. He had never managed to ride that far before and not only that he then walked around, did his shop and cycled home with it again. This is something which Colin has not done since he became unwell and is such a great achievement and demonstrates the hard work, he has put in.

Colin is now going for regular walks again and in his words 'is doing so much more than he was this time a year ago'. He says that he is especially really enjoying the feeling of being able to walk whilst doing things like his shopping rather than using his mobility scooter which he relied on so greatly not so long ago.

Colin now has his sights set on his next goal which is to go fishing again which he has not done for many years. He would like to achieve this goal by the end of this year whilst maintaining his regular walking and cycling.

Colin does still struggle with his mental health and finds he still has good and bad days but the thing I find most admirable about Colin is that regardless, when he feels able to, he continues to take steps to achieve his goals and maintain his independence. I am excited to continue to see Colin thrive in his next challenge and beyond!



SpeakUp Campaigns

Kerb Campaign

Jonah, a SpeakUp Wiltshire member, started a campaign to get extra drop kerbs put in around his estate for himself and the other disabled people that live in his area. This is to make access around the estate safer as at present they need to use the road, which is dangerous due to it being on a blind bend.

We supported Jonah to meet with the relevant town councillor to show him what needed to be done, he agreed that changes needed to be made and that he would ensure the work was done sometime in the near future. Watch this space!



#SeeMySkills Campaign



Stills taken from our #SeeMySkills video

Hannah, a SpeakUp Wiltshire member created a campaign because she thinks that employers should understand more about employing people with learning difficulties. The #SeeMySkills campaign is fighting for employment equality for disabled people. Hannah created a video which asked the question 'what do you see when you look at me?' The purpose of the video was to challenge people to see our skills before they saw our disability.

You can view the video here: <https://youtu.be/wyvDW8aFWP0>

Some of our recent **MakeSomeoneWelcome** sign-ups have been making pledges about how to make their communities kind and make people welcome. This storyboard shows Calne Central's journey to achieving their pledge.

Calne Central

Our #MakeSomeoneWelcome Pledge



Calne Central signed up to #MakeSomeoneWelcome

They pledged to set up a community fridge/freezer outside the building

They put a fridge/freezer outside so people can access food 24/7

People donate food to put in the fridge/freezer

"The most popular food is rice, pasta and tinned meats"

They also have fruit, veg, bread, tinned goods, dairy and frozen meals



It's great to have you on board Calne Central - Keep up the good work!

Produced by WCIL User Engagement Team www.wiltshirecil.org.uk userengagement@wiltshirecil.org.uk
 Charity No 1120611 Company No 5480761

We have been working with Headway Salisbury and South Wiltshire and their Headsmart Group as part of our **ListenUp Wilts** campaign. They want to let everyone know what it is like for someone with a brain injury when crossing the road. They have produced these two posters as part of their awareness



The User Engagement team have launched a series focusing on inequality on social media and will be asking a question each week about how we can challenge and change inequality.

#ChallengeInequality

#ChallengeInequality

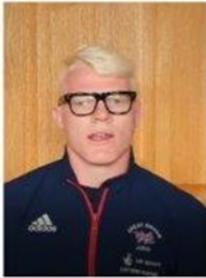
Starting on 1st March 2021, every Monday for the next 14 weeks Wiltshire CIL will be posting a statistic or fact about disability inequality and will ask a question about how we can change and challenge it.

Follow us on social media so that you can share your views, thoughts and ideas about how we

#ChallengeInequality

@wiltshirecil @wiltscil @listenupwilts

Young, Disabled; Lockdown and My Future



EVAN

We wanted to give young adults between the ages of 16 - 25 a chance to have their voices heard.
This is the amazing result:



ESPERANZA

7 unique stories
1 online magazine - viewed and read **10,427** times
3 radio broadcasts
All co-produced remotely during Covid pandemic



JACK

Now that we are coming out of lockdown, we want to look to the future, watch this space!



ABBIE



Following our **Voices of Disability** campaign all of the contributions have been put into an online magazine which you can read here:

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/view/65175450/voices-of-disability>

Community Connecting



STARTING AS A COMMUNITY CONNECTOR DURING LOCKDOWN

BY MOIRA CONROY

COMMUNITIES WORKING TOGETHER DURING LOCKDOWN

I'm not gonna lie (to coin a well known teenage phrase!), it felt like a bit of a daunting time to be starting a new role as a community connector in mid October, two weeks before Lockdown No.2 started! What on earth am I going to be connecting people to I wondered during those first few days and weeks.

But as I gradually began to find my way (virtually of course!) around Melksham, I started forging relationships with some great local organisations which would help me to support the people I was working alongside. I started making referrals to Age Friendly Melksham's amazing Friendly Phone Call Service, where local volunteers would call people experiencing social isolation and loneliness for a regular chin wag. They also set up a fantastic Christmas meals service that we could all refer into, linking volunteers who were happy to cook an extra Christmas dinner or two with people who would be alone on Christmas Day. Some of the people I spoke to said they'd had a lovely Christmas dinner courtesy of the initiative, and perhaps even more importantly, felt valued and cared for because of the kindness shown to them.

Celebrating Age Wiltshire fortuitously decided to pilot their Creative Conversations project in Melksham shortly after I started - how lucky was I! Addressing social isolation and loneliness through the arts was at the heart of the project, and this was achieved through linking a person with an interest in the arts in the broadest sense with an artist and a volunteer to have weekly conversations to explore that interest. One participant said "I really look forward to the calls and I'm on a real high after I've spoken to Amy and David". Another told me that he has written two songs since starting the project, which his artist has recorded, and that he has been inspired to continue to write songs in the future. To continue the musical theme, we are now working with Celebrating Age Wiltshire to identify people who would love a short doorstep concert in the next month or so that they and their neighbours can enjoy in the comfort and safety of their own homes. A little ray of sunshine to look forward to amidst very challenging times.

Connecting people with each other has also been a theme. I've recently introduced two ladies, both of whom love to walk but not on their own. One has a dog but struggles to walk her on her own because of her visual impairment. The other misses her own dog terribly, so a walk with a dog as well as a person would be an added bonus!

Finally, we have recently been successful in securing a small amount of funding from Melksham Area Board to forge connections between people through setting up small groups as lockdown restrictions ease. So watch this space...!



CONNECTING : IN ALL SENSES!



The people we work with have risen to the challenge of staying connected by using a range of methods: online, by phone, by mail and by meeting for socially distanced walks. Examples include signing up to Facebook to be in the audience of a son's virtual choir performance, embracing more old fashioned ways to keep in touch by receiving and sending cards in the post and, in a new take on the traditional befriending service, being matched up with another local resident, to have a weekly chat on the phone, with some people planning to meet up once restrictions are over.

One lady commented that her telephone befriender ... 'has proved to be such a good friend to me. I feel he needs me as much as I need him to talk to in such lonely times.'

COMMUNITIES COME TOGETHER

In Calne many older people were catered for with a cream tea, organized by the Local Older Persons Champion from Calne Area Board.

Cakes and sandwiches were accompanied by cards from Calne school children, all delivered by volunteers, including our Community Connector and the Local Area Coordinator.

Bags were dropped off on doorsteps and it was nice to see people's faces after connecting for so long over the phone.



Strive To Thrive!

OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS, THE COMMUNITY CONNECTORS HAVE BEEN FACILITATING ONLINE SESSIONS COVERING LOTS OF DIFFERENT TOPICS, FROM RELAXATION TO MUSIC!

THE GROUPS WERE STARTED WITH THE HOPE OF GIVING PEOPLE AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT (VIRTUALLY) DURING LOCKDOWN, WHILST ALSO LEARNING SOMETHING NEW OR FURTHER BUILDING ON AN EXISTING INTEREST OR HOBBY!

THE HOPE WAS ALSO TO GIVE US AS CONNECTORS, SOMETHING TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO DURING LOCKDOWN! AND TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE & DIFFERENT TASK FOR US TO BE WORKING ON – MAINTAINING OUR RESILIENCE LEVELS, AS WELL AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRACTICE WHAT WE PREACH & UTILISE OUR OWN STRENGTHS, SKILLS & AMAZING QUALITIES!

THE EMPHASIS WAS ON GROUP PARTICIPATION & COOPERATIVE WORKING AND ORGANISATION, PUTTING THE PEOPLE WHO WE ARE WALKING ALONGSIDE IN THE DRIVING SEAT, & ENCOURAGING THEM TO STEP OUTSIDE OF THEIR COMFORT ZONES.

NATURALLY, SOME SESSIONS HAVE TAKEN A WHILE TO GET GOING & OTHERS HAVE BEEN VERY WELL ATTENDED, BUT THE CONNECTORS HAVE PUT TOGETHER SOME AMAZING CONTENT WHICH HAS BEEN MUCH ENJOYED & APPRECIATED BY OUR PEOPLE!

HERE IS WHAT THEY HAVE SAID SO FAR!

It was nice to see other faces and meet other people. I was feeling a bit of both anxious and excited, anxious of not knowing people and feeling a bit different because of my sturred speech and tremor in my hand/arm and excited because I was doing something different on my own for myself. I'm hoping it will give me a bit more confidence. I was looking forward to it hoping it would help me with the ups and downs in my life, which it does! And it was lovely to just to escape from everything around me and relax, the breathing techniques are helpful when I'm anxious.

I felt both excited and a bit apprehensive about my first meeting in Zoom. I have had limited interaction with people recently and lack confidence. However, it was really great to connect with others and to be part of a online community. To have a focus on subjects that were both confidence building and inspiring. I really enjoyed the nature sessions as it reminded me of skills that I once enjoyed and motivated me to more present with nature. It was definitely a positive experience and had a direct impact on my mental health. A tremendous opportunity for some 'normalty' during these difficult times.

"As a connector, it has been great to see friendships develop & for the members of the group to take leadership. A couple of people from the film club have planned to meet for a walk, have shared tips & advice on managing their anxiety & speak outside of the group!"

-Nichola-Trowbridge PCN

The hope is for the groups to continue with limited intervention from the Connectors & maybe one day, for them to meet up in person!

The collage consists of five posters stacked vertically:

- 20 MIN RELAX:** A poster with a person in a meditative pose. Text includes "FREE YOUR MIND", "20 MIN RELAX", and "FOR ALL AGES WHOSE BODY HAS BEEN FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO RELAXATION FOR THE WORLD TO YOU A MOMENT OF RELAXATION".
- NOVEL COMPANIONS VIRTUAL BOOK CLUB:** A poster showing a row of colorful books. Text includes "New, informal, light-hearted virtual book club" and "FIRST GROUP MEETING TUESDAY 2ND MARCH 15:30PM - 17:00PM".
- BSL Basics! Conversation group!** A poster with a hand sign icon. Text includes "Have you always wanted to learn some basic British Sign Language?" and "Join us from Thursday 19th March".
- Share Some Musical:** A poster with a smiling face and musical notes. Text includes "Share some musical" and "A chance to share your favourite songs and artists with others in a safe and supportive environment".
- DO YOU LOVE TO SING?:** A poster with a microphone icon. Text includes "DO YOU LOVE TO SING?", "YOU WOULD LOVE TO LEARN A LITTLE MORE ABOUT SINGING IN THE SINGERS' JOURNALS OF THE WEEK BY JOHN WOODHEAD", and "STARTING FROM THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY, THURSDAY 10:30-11:00AM".

Team Cuisine

Join this informal zoom group for sharing recipes, cooking tips and inspiration for making something!

STARTING FROM THURSDAY 18TH FEBRUARY, THURSDAY 10:30-11:00AM



Nature Is Therapy

Staff News

Welcome...



Lynne Lester
Direct Payment
Finance Team
Manager



Liz Denbury
Calne PCN
Community
Connector



Katie Burholt
Chippenham./
Corsham & Box
Community
Connector



Moira Conroy
Melksham (Older
People) Community
Connector



Natasha Parkin
HIU Community
Connector

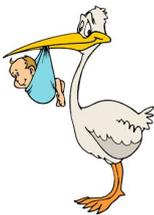


Lydia Rogers
Sarum South
Community
Connector



Teresa McMahon
Sarum South
Community
Connector

Congratulations...



To Poppy Witts-Woodward who had a baby boy, Zachary John, on 23rd December 2020.

Farewell...



In March we said goodbye to Mia O'Sullivan who is off to train as an O.T. Mia has been a great WCIL'ER and will be very much missed. We wish her all the very best for her future adventures.

DEVIZES STORY TRAIL

OUR EXPERIENCES IN A YEAR OF LOCKDOWNS

People of Devizes and the surrounding areas have shared their stories to the project "Tales from the Town; Celebrating Strength in the Community".

Find more quotes around town, by checking in the windows of independent retailers.

Use the QR codes to take you to the full stories or find large print excerpts at The Healthy Life in Little Brittox, Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living in Couch Lane, and outside the Assize Court

Contribute your hope or pledge for rebuilding our community after lockdown by filling in a "brick" available at The Healthy Life, The Shambles, or via the second QR code

Be in with a chance of winning one of 3 x £10 credit for a participating independent shop when you contribute your hope or pledge

"We don't know what others are going through. Social media can be that mask that covers many dark secrets. All that is shown on my Facebook was pretty pictures of my walks.



How would you have known what I was going through? Talk to people. Ask if they're ok. Call them up"



To read the full story that this quote was taken from, use this QR code...

SCAN ME



To find out how you can win a £10 voucher and to read the rest of the stories, use this QR code...

SCAN ME



DEVIZES STORY TRAIL

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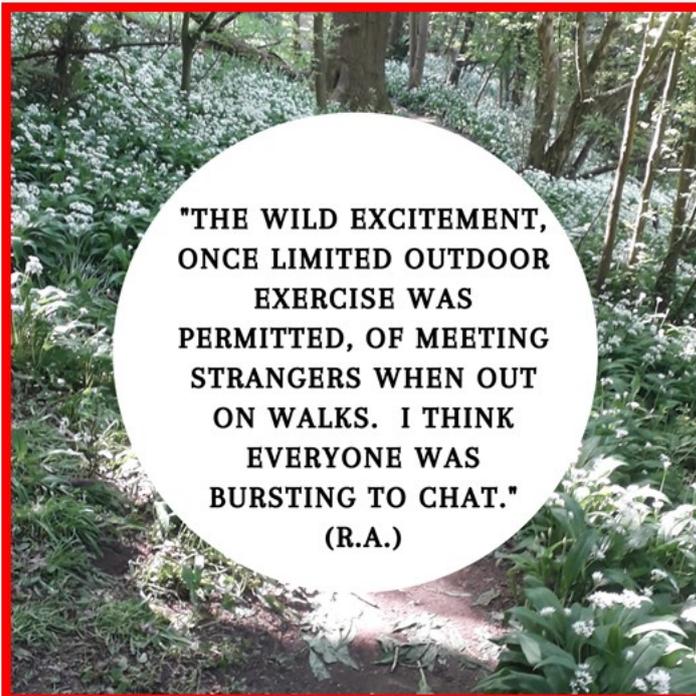
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Be in with a chance of winning one of 3 x £10 credit for a participating independent shop when you contribute

**"THE WILD EXCITEMENT, ONCE LIMITED OUTDOOR EXERCISE WAS PERMITTED, OF MEETING STRANGERS WHEN OUT ON WALKS. I THINK EVERYONE WAS BURSTING TO CHAT."
(R.A.)**



To read the full story that this quote was taken from, use this QR code...

SCAN ME



To find out how you can win a £10 voucher and to read the rest of the stories, use this QR code...

SCAN ME



GET INVOLVED

Facebook

Join the **Wiltshire Autism Forum** Facebook Group to get your views heard and contribute to the All Age Autism Partnership Board key themes projects

Join the **Wiltshire Disabilities Together** Facebook Group to connect with other disabled people with similar interests

search for the groups on Facebook

ListenUp Wiltshire

Is there an topic or issue that you would like to raise awareness of or tell Wiltshire about?

We can work with you to create a campaign and get your voice heard

userengagement@wiltshirecil.org.uk

Community Connectors

Do you have a learning disability and would you like to join a focus group to look at how the Community Connectors can work with you to achieve your good life?

userengagement@wiltshirecil.org.uk

Charges for social care and cuts to provision during the Coronavirus pandemic?

Have you experienced cuts to your social care services or had increased charges for your social care during the past 12 months? Social Care Future along with other partners, individuals and family carers are looking to raise awareness of the issues of increased charges, and need your help to gather a national picture of the charges and cuts to social care that appear to be happening across England.

<https://puttingpeoplefirst.limeask.com/158932?fbclid=IwAR1HTM8evskdldLpap86-gVo4Ew4K6SYB-RWC7Qc7CPvqnJftyFULn1xHY>



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