



A warm, safe Christmas at last

Karen describes the last two years of homelessness as a living hell, so it is uplifting to picture her in the sanctuary of her own home this Christmas as a result of Second Step's help.

Karen's life unravelled rapidly when she lost her job and then her flat; perhaps unsurprisingly her mental health declined equally swiftly too. When the engine of the camper van she had been forced to live in blew up she realised she needed help.

Two years of living hell

Luckily she was allowed to park her van in the garage of her mechanic friend, but her living conditions were grim especially in winter, and plunged her into two years of deep-seated depression. Feeling a burden to her friends she gradually withdrew from them.

Karen did have some support through her darkest days, from fellow van owners that provided her with a sense of community and from her loving family and her one constant companion, her dog. However her family couldn't offer her a home and it wasn't until she met Lynne and Jason, support workers from our South Gloucestershire team that her life started to change.

Going out for coffee

Lynne got the ball rolling through taking Karen to doctors' appointments and helping her to apply for social housing. Karen told us how the simple act of Lynne asking her to go for a coffee meant she became more confident about leaving

the refuge of her van. Jason then continued to fight for Karen: advocating on her behalf with the council, organising appointments and providing her with "a calm presence" throughout the turmoil.

Earlier this year, Karen moved into her own place in Bristol. She says that even now she has to pinch herself to believe that it is hers, that it is warm, and that she can close the door and feel safe.

Names have been changed.

Helplines at Christmas

Samaritans - 24 hours a day, 365 days a year -
National 116 123 or 0845 90 90 90

Rethink - Mon – Fri 9am to 4pm (not bank holidays)
0300 5000 927

Mindline - local: Wed to Sun 8pm to midnight -
0808 808 0330, (Not Christmas Day or Boxing Day).

National Mindline - Mon to Fri 9am to 6pm – 0808 123 3393
(not Christmas Day, Boxing Day, 27th Dec, 1st and 2nd Jan).

Welcome to Second Step News



Season's Greetings!

Welcome to Second Step News - the newsletter for staff, volunteers and people who use our services.

In this December issue, meet Karen whose depression has lifted after working with South Gloucestershire support workers - Lynne and Jason

We also update you on the growth of our mentoring services, tell you about an event the Community Rehabilitation Service are putting on in the Spring and also talk to Luke Elstone whose group B Strong U belong are fundraising for Second Step

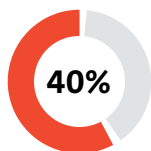
Do get in touch if you'd like to share your news, and have a peaceful and restful break.

Jane Edmonds
PR & Communications Manager

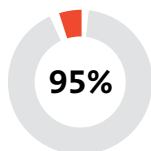
jane.edmonds@second-step.co.uk
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Our Volunteers in 2016

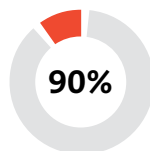
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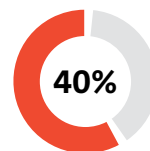
of peer volunteers have gone into paid employment or education following volunteering with us.



of volunteers feel their confidence in their abilities has increased.



of volunteers have increased their skills.



of volunteers feel their mental health and wellbeing has improved since volunteering.



of people feel volunteering has increased their ability to get into paid employment.

Two New Mentoring Projects Launch

Volunteer Services have recently set up two new mentoring programmes, one of which is within the Community Rehabilitation Service in Bristol, which Second Step runs in partnership with AWP and the women's mental health charity Missing Link.

Volunteers are paired with people using the service to help them to learn a new skill, connect with people and take part in activities that make them feel good. The activities range from cooking to playing pool.

Get Connected

The team has also launched a new programme funded through Bristol Mental Health called Get Connected which is a one to one support project for people who have been discharged from the Assessment and Recovery Service. Get Connected aims to help people feel confident to support themselves after their formal support has finished.

Mentoring opportunities

Volunteer services are currently looking for volunteer mentors with a range of mental health, homelessness, previous offences, or drug and alcohol "lived experience".

These mentors will be trained and teamed up with service users to work together to help make a real difference to people's lives.

One mentee told us: "My mentor is one of the best people I have ever met within mental health services. He has helped me with motivation, confidence and support which is pushing me forward. I have accomplished so much and I am in a much better place."

For more information contact the team on:

volunteering@second-step.co.uk
0117 909 6630

B strong U belong super fundraisers!

Strong U Belong is the brain child of Luke Elstone and a group of his friends. Luke tragically lost a close friend, Pete Davies, who committed suicide in 2012. Luke said: "The worst thing was that none of us were aware how bad things had become for Pete". Since Pete's death, Luke's friends have spoken more openly about their own depression, anxiety and self-doubt.

The group are fundraising for two local mental health charities including Second Step, aiming to raise £10,000 in total. Their first sporting event this October was an obstacle race: Somerset's Rocket Race. The group have a whole host of fundraising events planned including half marathons, triathlons, a quiz night, and a music festival. These activities culminate in a trip to climb Mount Longonot in Kenya in June 2017.

If you are interested in joining Luke and his fundraising group, he'd love to hear from you.

bstrongubelong@hotmail.com

"We want to help others who are struggling with their mental health with how to access help so that they do not suffer in silence".



Some of the B Strong U Belong fundraising team

To find out more visit

<http://bstrongubelong.wixsite.com>. You can follow the group on Facebook www.facebook.com/bstrongubelong/

To make a donation visit

www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/luke-elstone

NHS

Making connections

Bristol Community Rehabilitation Service will be holding an event on 15 February 2017 in celebration of their work to date. The occasion will be an opportunity for people who use the service and those that work for the service to come together and spend some time with each other.

The theme of the event is "Connection". There will be different activities to try out including drumming sessions from "Mind your Music" and massage therapists from Hamilton House.

Film Premiere

One of the event's highlights will be the premiere of a short film telling the story of one of the service's many clients. Bev has overcome many of her mental health issues and developed new skills, becoming involved again in her community. We hope the film and the event as a whole will inspire and encourage other people to try new things to help their recovery.

Since the service opened in April 2015 it has supported more than 100 people both in its accommodation centre at Wellbridge House in Brentry and within the community.

Bristol Mental Health community rehabilitation service

Hope, courage and walking

Second Step's Recovery College walking group have decorated a Christmas tree as part of Treefest, which is a spectacular display of Christmas trees held at St Mary Redcliffe Church from 9-14 December.



Senior Tutor and Learning Development Officer Amanda Headley-White ran four workshops with two dedicated volunteers, Jim and Sue, who along with members of the walking group made decorations for the tree around the themes of hope, courage and walking!

The walking group visited the display on Tuesday 13 December where there were over 100 trees each decorated in a unique and innovative way reflecting the ethos and creativity of the organisation behind it.

The event raises money for charities chosen by the church and attracts thousands of visitors. The decorations will be on display in reception at Second Step's Brunswick Square offices after Treefest finishes on 14 December.

Golden Key's peer mentors



Golden Key's Peer Mentor Team

The Golden Key Peer Mentor Team is a network of people with lived experience who support Golden Key clients. The team started work last September, and now consists of a mix of workers from different agencies including Bristol charity Developing Health and Independence (DHI), Bristol Drugs Project (BDP), Second Step and ARA.

The first peer mentor induction courses ran in November 2015, and there are still peers from that original cohort working on the project. Golden Key currently has 19 peer mentors matched with clients.

The team holds monthly meetings where peers share information, practical issues and experiences. Feedback from peers includes: "For once in my life I feel wanted!, Golden Key helped my real self; discovering what I'm happy doing and what I don't like".

Project lead Alv Hirst said: "Over our first year of working, the theme of co-production has strongly emerged. The team is committed to developing authentic partnerships with our peers to ensure that lived experience informs the progress of the service".

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Working for Recovery and Wellbeing

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