

"It was only once I got to Second Step that I felt I counted. They gave me a safe environment and for the first time I was not told I was deluded."



Making his story count

Paul lost his home and all his belongings while in a psychiatric unit under a section. That was less than two years ago. Now he's telling his story as part of our #HomeEqualsHope campaign.

While Paul's story is unique, he identifies with many hundreds of people in Bristol and in other cities who have nowhere to call home. For him getting back on his feet was about being listened to and really heard, being seen as a person and not just a diagnosis.

We met Paul over a year ago when he came to live at Toll House Court, one of Second Step's Bristol projects which offer support to people without a home. Today Paul is living independently in a flat of his own, still with some support, but with a lot more hope than he had before. He said: "Second Step really listened to me - no-one had done that before and I was respected and treated as a human being."

Aisha's Passion Pays off

Aisha, who was forced to leave her home, family and friends in London to start a new life in Bristol so that she could escape her violent husband, says there needs to be more refuges and more support for women like her.

She said: "What was amazing was that people with lived experience were being listened to. We have got something to offer, we've been there, done that and got the T-shirt."

The politicians on the All Party Parliamentary Group on Domestic and Sexual Violence, Mental Health and Substance Misuse promised to put relationship education and domestic abuse on the agenda for schools after listening to Aisha, a member of IF, the Golden Key's advisory group of people with lived experience.

The group also heard from AVA (Against Violence & Abuse), The Nelson Trust and National Addiction Centre.



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Learning with St Basils

Birmingham's young people's homeless charity St Basils believes in the importance of taking a psychologically informed approach (PIE).

Last month, Second Step met a team from St Basils, which works with young people aged 16 to 25, to learn what else we could be doing to be a more psychologically aware organisation. St Basil's decision

to embed PIE has taken the last seven years.

Michael Pearson, Second Step's Senior Operations Manager said: "The visit gave us ideas about how to embed a psychologically informed approach into every facet of the organisation and has reinforced the importance of having PIE champions as well as welcoming physical environments for staff and service users."

**St
Basils**
Works with young people

Bristol's 'Health Heroes'

The award-winning Community Rehabilitation Service is up for another award!

This time we're hoping to bag The Excellence in Mental Health Care award in the prestigious NHS at 70 Parliamentary Awards looking for the nation's Health Heroes. Local Bristol MP Thangam Debbonaire will champion the work we do at the next stage of the awards which take place in July.

Since 2015, the service has supported 300 people, reduced inpatient admissions and successfully discharged 38% of clients to their GP - a really positive outcome considering many of the people we work with have been in secondary mental health service for many years.

As winners of the Collaboration (Integration) award at the Third Sector Care awards @3rdsectorcare in London in December last year, we have high hopes that we will be nominated. Read more about the service at second-step.co.uk/nhs-services/community-rehabilitation.

300 people supported

inpatient admissions DOWN

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What do you do to de-stress?

The focus for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week is stress.

According to research, each year 16 million people say stress is a key factor of their mental health problems. Giving people tools to tackle their stress can also help tackle other mental health problems.

With this in mind we are arranging a number of activities for our staff, such as a lunchtime Tai Chi sessions and chair yoga, to use while at work or any time they need it!

During the week, Bristol Wellbeing College is also planning a series of free events. Find out more about these at second-step.co.uk/bristol-wellbeing-college



My art is a Positive form of escapism

Martin Dagger, one of our Supported Housing tenants, says painting plays an important part in his recovery. He was delighted to have the chance to exhibit his work recently at an event which celebrated the artistic talent of people who have been homeless.

"I started to experiment with form and colours to create a pastime where I could express myself."

He said: "I started doing drawings, paintings primarily - due to limited access to materials - in mental hospitals. Due to the low sensory stimuli environment, I started to experiment with form and colours to create a pastime where I could express myself. It was something exciting battling against the mundane and restrictive atmosphere inside psych' wards. It felt like a form of rebellion. I used it and still do til this day as a positive form of escapism."

Taking on the Camino de Santiago walk

Bristol gardener and environmentalist Ana Burton began a 500 mile pilgrimage through France and Spain on Friday 13 April. Her five week trek has taken months to plan and will give Ana the space and time to reflect.

Ana is passionate about mental health and is a huge supporter of Second Step and the work it does. To follow Ana's Camino blog please sign up at anacamina.com.



Tell Carlos what you think!

New Communications Volunteer Carlos Casas wants to know what you think about the Volunteer Newsletter.

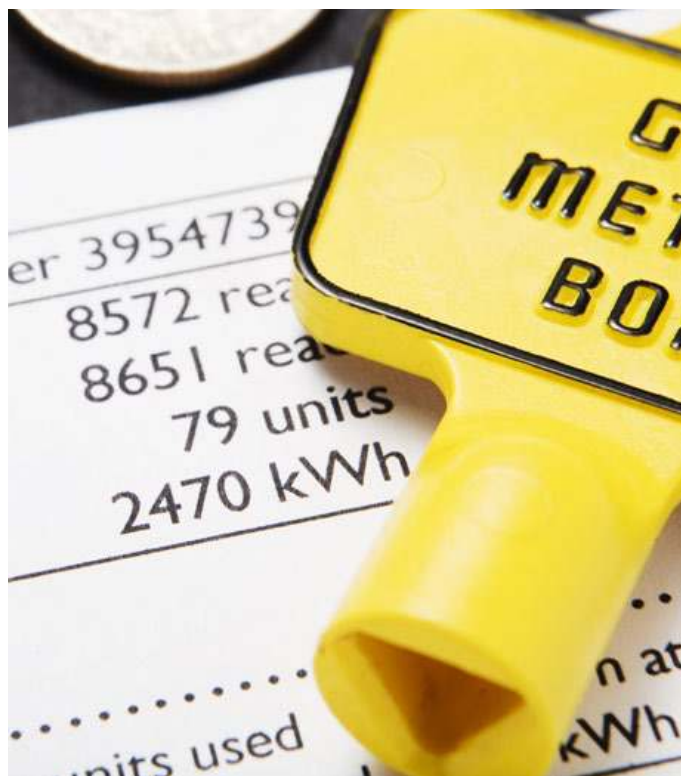
He's sent out a short email survey to all volunteers and staff and is keen to hear your views. "This way we can improve the newsletter and make sure it gives out the information people want!" If you need the survey to be sent to you again, just email carlos.casas@second-step.co.uk.

Out & about

Second Step attended a Tackling Fuel Poverty event in February to discuss how Bristol can help lift people out of the draining cycle of anxiety about not being able to afford to keep warm in the cold weather.

We received a lot of interest from other organisations about the need to consider the effects of poverty on people's mental health - especially those which offer debt advice and support.

Currently one in eight households in Bristol - about 45,000 people - are classed as being in fuel poverty, with many having to make the desperate choice between heating or eating because they simply cannot afford to do both. Over the winter, Second Step's accommodation services helped ensure service users were fully aware of the discounts, grants and support available to help deal with the cold.



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