



I felt lost for a long time. I felt unsure of who I was and now I finally feel like I've found myself... again

Finding myself...Again

At 23, Lauren has her life ahead of her. Speaking enthusiastically about her experimental painting and passion for literature, the young Bristolian girl is proud to call herself a 'writer'. Lauren feels positive about life right now, but 12 months ago she was in a significantly different state of mind when she was referred to Bristol's Community Rehabilitation Service.

"I've suffered with anxiety for as long as I can remember. But it was made far worse when my father was diagnosed with cancer and had to have an emergency tracheotomy. We were told he may lose the ability to speak. Forever. I took it upon myself to be his carer. I wanted to look after him. I needed to look after him. I want to look after everyone. I didn't realise I wouldn't be able to cope with it."

Detrimental effects

"My anxiety became horrendous. I couldn't leave my house on my own for about two years. Even when I did manage to go out, I had to perform so many rituals that it was almost impossible. My OCD was out of control. Eventually I agreed to see the crisis team who referred me to Community Rehabilitation. I was given a Recovery Navigator who has been working with me to break down

my anxieties and fear. She has been indescribably helpful. She's amazing. I love her. Initially we'd go out very short distances, but slowly we'd extend the circle of what I could do. We would often go out in the car and I found it incredibly hard. However, we persevered. Bit by bit, I was able to restructure my confidence and get the better of my anxiety."

Gaining control

"I took the bold decision to end an unhealthy relationship with my boyfriend of eight years and I created an anthology about my experiences. I find that writing and painting give me a deeper insight and understanding - I can't recommend this enough. I regularly volunteer at a local charity shop, something I find very rewarding and beneficial and I'm now ready to make plans for my discharge."

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

With those hot and sultry summer days a very distant memory, it's time to embrace the more unpredictable weather of winter; cosying up, hunkering down and getting away from it all! So let's take some time for ourselves and read about all the wonderful things that are happening here at Second Step.

It's certainly been a busy time: with our new North Somerset Wellbeing Service getting the thumbs up

Best wishes

Jane Edmonds

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from commissioners after a successful first few months; a new project launch offering real hope to men across the region, as well as an inspiring insight into one young woman's battle to beat her demons and start living her life once again.

As ever, please get in touch if you have something you'd like to share or a story you'd like to tell to the wider Second Step family.

New project reaches out to men

The Hope project has been live now for over a month and in this time the team have been hard at work trying to get the message out, that its okay to not be okay.

The project which is focussing on men in Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset is part of the Government's national suicide prevention strategy. So far the team have been working in Bristol's main hospital wards at BRI and Southmead, they have also promoting the project to target audiences such as football fans and beer drinkers with the tagline **How are you feeling?** They have also been taking part in the national Movember campaign which raises awareness of mental health issues for men. Go to the **Hope Project** page on our website to find out more.



Joe Clarke from Hope is interviewed about the project by the Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group while raising awareness at a recent Bristol Rovers match.

Tackling homelessness

To mark the successful magazine the **Big Issue's** 27th birthday, Second Step took out (a hugely discounted) full page ad to remind readers that homelessness is still an issue we all care about. Our striking full page ad spoke about the work we do and the approach we take to help people who battle daily for survival without a place they can call home.

To find out more about our approach to tackling homelessness, go to our website: second-step.co.uk.



Thumbs up for new wellbeing service

At its October launch, the **North Somerset Wellbeing Service** promised to fill a gap in mental health provision in the region with its recovery-focused activities. And now just three months on commissioners have given the service a huge vote of confidence by extending the contract until June 2020.

Justine, Chair of **Clarity, North Somerset Independent Mental Health Network**, welcomed the news and said: "People in North Somerset with a mental health need will now be able to look forward with hope for a service with greater security and continuity for the future."

The new service offers a tailored programme of workshops, courses and activities, including **Wellbeing Cafés** to new as well as existing clients. It works closely with people who have been using the service and volunteers to make sure the new programme of activities fits their needs. Head to second-step.co.uk to find out more.



Hardy staff, volunteers and supporters of the new service braved the cold for a dawn dip at Clevedon Marine Lake on 10 October, World Mental Health Day.

Golden Key Good Practice Awards

All over Bristol people are working hard to improve services and outcomes for people with complex needs. **Golden Key** wants to celebrate the good work that is taking place to provide better support for the most vulnerable people in our communities.

The **Golden Key Great Practice Awards** aim to recognise individuals, teams and organisations who are doing things differently to improve services for people with complex needs.

The winners will be announced at an awards ceremony on 23 January 2019 at the New Room John Wesley Chapel in Bristol. Each winner will be presented with their award by Deputy Mayor of Bristol, Asher Craig (pictured).

Find out more at goldenkeybristol.org.uk



It's about you!

The poignancy and quality of the work from the **Telling Your Story** course at the **Bristol Wellbeing College** became the inspiration for our **It's About You** blog.

The blog has become the place where we share the best of the College and its courses, with poetry, prose, images and small pearls of wisdom contributed by learners, volunteers and staff members.

Our first post launched in September with a poem by Finance's Jem Cattle based on PR & Comms Jane Edmonds' morning commute. Since then, contributions by College learners have been arriving thick and fast, with themes touching on memory, resilience, the Cold War, and the nature of the human species, eloquently summarised by student liaison coordinator Ben Lilford's review of Moby's latest album.

It takes courage to share a story, but the rewards are plentiful. We want this blog to continue as a platform where experiences can be freely shared and creativity celebrated. Whether it's about recovery, experience, memory or hope, ultimately, it's about the people we work for and with.



A 'Life Map' by Fiona, from a recent 'Writing With Memory' workshop, in which we explore areas of our lives we would write as a memoir.

Sylvia's Fund gets off to a great start

The first grant-giving project of its kind at Second Step is close to completing its three-month pilot in our High Support Accommodation Service. **Sylvia's Fund** provides service users with a grant of up to £50 to give them access to things they may otherwise struggle to purchase, and which will help with their recovery.

So far grants have included a wifi dongle, a professional haircut and postage overseas for some

paintings which a client sold in an art exhibition. The application process is simple with a straightforward form which can be filled in by the applicant's support worker.

The fund is open to current clients of the **High Support Accommodation Service** with plans to roll it out to all Second Step clients in the New Year. If you want to find out more, please email our Communications Manager jane.edmonds@second-step.co.uk.



Bristol teens Team Wildcat raised money for Sylvia's Fund earlier this year

New training for staff wellbeing

If you have attended one of our **Wellbeing College** courses you will know how brilliantly they are delivered and how inspiring they are. We will now be providing some of these wellbeing courses in-house following a successful trial in the summer. Courses include **Five Ways to Wellbeing** and **Telling Your Story**.

We have also introduced a **Friendly Ear Programme** offering training in how best to deal with anxiety and stress. The Friendly Ear Programme is a mentoring scheme in which staff are matched with a trained go-to person who will provide the emotional support they require. In addition, line managers will receive training to help identify when members of their team are struggling and need support.



Talking to SIG

The **Service Improvement Group** (SIG) is talking to clients from the High Support Accommodation Service to find out how they feel about the service as well as asking what their ambitions are for Second Step.

Part of the organisation's business planning process, **SIG Chair Stuart Johnstone**, is optimistic that tenants would engage with the process. "They trust us implicitly because we've been through or are going through some of the same things they are experiencing," he said. The new plan will be presented to the organisation in the New Year. a donation to go towards an educational course. Clients can apply through their support workers or directly via a simple nomination form. Each nomination is considered by the Fund's Board.



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