



Yammy's heartfelt message of thanks was a conference highlight

“Without SecondStep I would definitely not be here talking to you today”

Yammy was supported by Second Step for more than two years and at our recent staff conference she took the opportunity to thank us all for helping her achieve huge change in her life.

Unable to be there in person, Yammy recorded her message via YouTube and it was played to staff and volunteers at the end of an already emotional afternoon session.

You can hear Yammy's message for yourselves by clicking on the Twitter icon on the Second Step website's Home Page, looking through our recent tweets and clicking on the link you will find there.

Yammy's story

Yammy is a delightful 30-year-old - happy, cheery and full of life. She is articulate, thoughtful and frank about her battle with a severe eating disorder diagnosed when she was just eight years old.

She met Second Step in the shape of support workers Sam and Ann in September 2010 when she had to move out of her supported home and needed a new place to go. They placed her in one of Second Step's supported houses and so began a journey which changed her life for ever.

“They cared for me in a professional way, they didn't push me. I never felt under pressure. They gave me space so if I was slipping and not committing, they would make it feel as part of the process, not that I had failed. I had become a recluse, I couldn't eat in public. I was a mess. But they took me out and gently, carefully, helped me learn to eat properly again.”

At her worst Yammy was in hospital prescribed heavy medication and weighing just 34kg (5 stone, 5 lbs). Her life crashed when she started university and her anorexia really started to kick in. Sam and Ann helped her maintain a steady healthier weight – a real achievement for Yammy. “I've used 100s of support services but I have never had anything like this before. I really would not be here today in the way I am if it hadn't have been for Second Step.”

Finding love

Second Step supported Yammy for two years and helped her keep stable long enough to maintain not just her weight but also a relationship with a new boyfriend and now husband, Chris. “They have helped Chris learn how to cope with me – he helps me use my special box full of the things that I know will help me not slip up and purge or binge. I love make-up and I love art so I have a face mask and face cream in there along with the colouring books and pens”.

Yammy married Chris in March 2013 and Sebastian was born a year later. “I was told I probably couldn't have babies because of all the damage I have done to my body. So Sebastian is a miracle – we are so pleased. I didn't binge once throughout the pregnancy – that's the longest time I have gone without bingeing for the last nine years.

Yammy and Chris currently live away from Bristol but make regular visits back to see their family and to keep in touch with Second Step.

Welcome to SecondStep news



Hello and welcome to the newsletter for staff and service users at Second Step. This is the online version of Second Step News, sent to staff and some service users. As you can see, by clicking on the browser link in this email you can view the images and visuals in full. We are also sending out a hard copy version by post to everyone who uses our services. If you'd like to see this version too, please let me know. I have spare copies.

Step Ahead steps out once more. The much-loved Step Ahead magazine has this month risen phoenix-like from the ashes of stapled A4 muted colour paper to become a glossier, shinier thing. Still called Step Ahead it is place for all things creative, from poetry and comment, to new ways of making a living while in recovery. Less newsy, but far more pickupable. I hope it is something we can build on and something that everyone at Second Step, whether you use one of our services or work here, can get involved with. We are planning to have two editions a year - one in the summer and another one in the winter. It has the potential for becoming a truly beautiful thing.

This month we are sending out Step Ahead with Second Step News - so you can see how different but how special they both are.

We need you

We'd love to hear from enthusiastic service users who would like to help us put together the articles and stories for Second Step News. If you'd like to get involved, do get in touch - my contact details are below.

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Turning life round with the help of a bike

Jamal took to the airwaves earlier this month to talk to BBC Radio Bristol listeners about how he battles with severe anxiety. Jamal and his Second Step support worker Christiane were invited onto the Breakfast Programme as part of Bristol's Cycle Festival. Jamal explained how he deals with sometimes crippling anxiety by cycling, often covering more than 10 miles a day on his bike.

Presenter Ali Vowles was so impressed she tweeted about meeting Jamal to her 3,859 followers!

Bursting with Pride



There was a distinct echo of the very first Avon Gay Pride in 1976 and this year's Bristol Pride festival. Then, as now, the festival and celebration of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender culture basked in the sunshine of a long hot summer, with thermometers pushing 40 degrees in the community tent, where, as usual, Second Step had its customary information and awareness stall.

At one point, health and safety officers removed the side of the famous rainbow striped marquee to allow for a freer airflow. Nevertheless, it remained a scorcher of a day.



George Ferguson, Mayor of Bristol, inspects the Second Step stall.

Over 20,000 people attended the festival at some point during the day. Many visited us and picked up our brand new Second Step leaflets, along with a selection of literature on LGBT mental health and housing related issues. Mayor of Bristol, George "Redpants" Ferguson called by and spoke to staff and volunteers about the rapid changes in the mental health sector.



>> Photo. Staff discussing our values at conference day

Ideas from staff day

Partnership

- Be sure to know our partners, who they are and what they do
- Keep our uniqueness and our values
- Communicate regularly

Collaboration with service users

- Let's have an intranet
- Give the same training opportunities to volunteers and relief staff as with other staff
- Ensure service users have a voice
- Organise a service user conference
- Better signposting

Hope, courage and empowerment

- Promote people with lived experience in staffing structure
- Promote people to talk about their recovery

Dignity and respect

- Co-production with staff and service users
- Be honest about what we can and cannot do
- Active listening

Choice

- Workshops for staff across the organisation on shared themes

Diversity and Difference

- Look at our similarities as well as our differences
- Co-produce services ensuring clients are at the centre of what we do
- Training in recovery for everyone

Our team

- Better communication between teams and across the organisation

Learning and reflection

- Celebrate small changes as well as larger ones
- Share learning from training in team meetings with others

Distilling our values

We are thinking about distilling our values down to five words so they will be easier for us all to remember and easier for us all to talk about. It would be good to know what you thought about this idea. Do let us know.

Valuing our Values

Partnerships – with communities and people, as this supports the best possible outcomes for service users

Collaboration with service users – this partnership is fundamental to success

Dignity and respect – at the heart of all Second Step's work

Hope, courage and empowerment – the foundation stones of recovery and living life to the full

Choice – flexible services support recovery and people's varied lifestyles

Diversity and difference – Second Step is passionate about social inclusion and eliminating stigma

Our team – Second Step's excellent reputation rests on the talent, experience and contributions from the team

Learning and reflection – essential to delivering better services

Putting our values into action

During the Second Step Staff Conference at the @Bristol docklands venue, we discussed our values with our facilitator for the day Tracy Israel. We were asked to look at a particular value and in our groups decide on a key message we would like to share about how best to live this value from an internal perspective and an external point of view.

The backdrop to our discussion was formed by a recent staff survey on how we felt about our values and how well we were doing as individuals at achieving them. More than 70% of staff had completed and returned the survey, which great news in itself.

We rated ourselves most highly on the Dignity and Respect value with 87% of respondents saying they felt they were very successful or successful in delivering it. We felt we were least successful in delivering partnerships - though there was still a high percentage - 55% - who felt very successful or successful in partnership working. After dignity and respect came hope and empowerment, followed by our team, collaboration, learning, diversity, choice and finally partnership.

Interestingly, while we value teamwork highly - it comes third in our list, from the comments staff left in the survey it is clear many of us do not feel part of an overall team. So while we feel strong within our smaller teams, we feel less connected as a whole organisational team.

Listed right are a few of the ideas we received about putting our values into action. They are taken from feedback on the day as well as from those written down on the flipchart paper. These suggestions will go to the Executive Team to decide how best to take forward.

Service user involvement in Second Step: what's going on?



Apologies that it's been a while since I've written an involvement update for the newsletter. It's been quite a busy first half of 2014 which means I've got quite a bit to tell you about:

The Stepping Forward Group has:

- Helped to review Second Step's Move-On Policy after successfully arguing that the existing policy needed to be changed.
- Co-produced a draft plan for the further development of service user involvement in Second Step (for 2014-16). The plan should be finalised in July and I'll write a summary of what it includes in the next newsletter.
- The group has recently highlighted their concerns about the effects that a recruitment freeze has had on the quality of a number of Second Step services.

The Service Improvement Group (SIG)

SIG has helped the organisation complete a review of a new version of the Recovery Plan and Safety Plan that is being piloted in a number of our services. They designed a questionnaire and used it to interview service users about their experience of using the new paperwork.

They reported their findings to a joint meeting of staff and service users. This meeting came to the unanimous conclusion that further work is needed to the paperwork before it is ready to be introduced in other Second Step services. Work to improve the forms has begun. This

redesign will be a joint venture between the Stepping Forward Group and a few key members of staff.

The Board

Like other charities, Second step is governed by a Board of volunteers who between them have the right skills and experience to lead the organisation. There are three places on our Board for people who use or have used our services. The chance to apply to become a Board member is advertised in May and interviews are due to take place by the end of June.

Involvement in individual services

In North Somerset there is a really active service user forum that meets monthly. An off shoot from the forum is a small staff and service user working group who are working together to agree improvements to the service.

The Supported Housing service has probably the best attended service user forum and the Intensive Tenancy Support service has recently restarted its forum. Other groups include the radio group and the allotment group and there is also recruitment training to be part of staff recruitment panels. Ask your support worker for more information.

Giz Thomas. Quality Assurance and User Involvement Officer



Yoga for mental health and wellbeing - new this September

The Community Conscious yoga class for the service users and support staff at Second Step has been running for over a year at Brunswick Square.

To make this valuable opportunity more widely available a new lunchtime yoga class is being launched for anyone who wants to improve their mental health and wellbeing. Want to come?

Where: Unitarian Chapel, Brunswick Square
When: 1pm – 2pm on Wednesdays

Starts September 3 £6/£5 waged/unwaged Buy a block of 6 classes and get one free

As one support worker said: "Go for it! It's the most relaxing form of exercise I've discovered. I always come away from it feeling on a high." Spread the word!