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## Covid-19

SOME SNIPPETS OF HOPE

We know the last few months have been settling for everyone, and that for some, it's been really hard. But it's been great to hear some positive stories from clients and staff too:

Dean was given a Sylvia's Grant Fund to help him buy a treadmill. 'I've been able to use up my energy, instead of rattling around the house feeling stressed and anxious.' **Dean, the Hope Project**

'Juggling full time work and family is always a challenging, but never more so than during the period when the children were at home during the last few months. I was fortunate that the flexibility of my role meant I could work from home and on occasion break my hours up with early starts and later finishes to allow breaks in the day to look after my children.' **Sarah, Central Services**

'We got in touch with our tenants, knowing that they would be anxious about keeping their houses clean and safe, and we deep cleaned all the areas of high risk. It's been appreciated, and it's helped some clients make positive changes to the way they look after their homes.' **Lisa, Housing Team**

We're continuing to follow Government guidelines and work with our clients in the best way we can.

## Outpouring of healing

How art plays an instrumental role in Paulette's recovery **P.2.**

## Editor's welcome

Thank you for taking time to read Hope, our Second Step newsletter for staff, volunteers and people who use our services. We're sending this newsletter out to you to make sure those who can't get online easily can read it too. Plus, we hope you agree that it's rather nice to receive the 'real thing' in the post, especially during these unusual times! Our Autumn issue is all about surviving in lockdown and in the continuing Covid-19 environment. We're delighted to be delighted to be sharing stories of hope and courage from some of our clients: Paulette, Heather, Kevin and Christopher (not his real name).

**Please do let us know what you think of our newsletter, we love to hear from you. Your stories, ideas and thoughts will help us make the Hope newsletter the best it can be! Please email [pr&comms@second-step.co.uk](mailto:pr&comms@second-step.co.uk)**

## Addressing Racism - update

A MESSAGE FROM ANDY WARREN, DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Following on from the Black Lives Matter protests, and after many discussions with staff and clients, we've been looking to change our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion. As some of you will know, we've proposed a new way of working to ensure colleagues and clients from black, Asian, minority and ethnic backgrounds will be heard, and treated, without discrimination.

We're now at the stage now of inviting colleagues, and people who use Second Step services, to get involved in any way they can, but specifically by joining new groups that we've set up to do the incredibly important work of addressing racism together. For updates, please do go to our Black Lives Matter page on our website [www.second-step.co.uk](http://www.second-step.co.uk) which you can access from the home page. And, if you have any questions, please do get in touch by using the email address: [EDI2020@second-step.co.uk](mailto:EDI2020@second-step.co.uk)

# Outpouring of healing

WORDS: JANE EDMONDS  
ARTWORK: PAULETTE

**Oh to feel heart to heart beating  
To feel soft breath upon my cheek  
To play hide and go seek**

This is a verse from Paulette's favourite poem, Shattered, one of a number of poems she wrote during lockdown. It's a lament to the years she spent without her daughter, taken from her as her baby and who lived away from her for seven long years.

**"My daughter is 31 now, and she has a daughter, my grandchild who is two in August. I see in her all the things I missed with my daughter. It was shattering."**

Paulette, who has used a number of Second Step services, worked with Evert, one of Second Step's community support workers, discovering words and paintings together. The result is a body of work which is hugely impressive: rich, emotional and raw.

**"I have never felt such a sense of achievement before. I was flowing with it, the words flowed, the watercolours and pastels took shape. Evert was amazing. There was no pressure, just this. It kept me out of hospital."**

Paulette's poems and paintings are being made into a booklet which she can keep and copies of which she can give to her friends and family. She is dedicating the book to everyone at Second Step. She says: "Get some paper and grab a pen and see what happens, if just one person finds the joy I found, I will be happy."



**Healing:** One of the paintings that Paulette produced during lockdown.





## Online art inspires

KEEPING WELL DURING COVID-19

Clients from North Somerset Wellbeing Service have been sharing stories about how art and creativity has kept them well during the pandemic. You can see them too on our Instagram channel @wearesecondstep.

Heather, who shares her **WhatMakesMeWell** story about the healing power of knitting, tells us:

**"I find knitting very therapeutic, and when I feel I can't do anything else, I can often do knitting. It is calming. It offers consistency. It insists I pay attention, and gently points out when I've gone wrong. Taking stitches out has become as important as creating them."**



## Life-saving project expands

Our suicide prevention service, the Hope Project, provides emotional and practical support for men aged between 30 and 64. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the service has taken on extra staff for a short period to support more men in distress.

Since the project began 18 months ago, it has helped 384 men in psychological distress or who have recently self-harmed, but are not currently using other mental health services. One of Hope's clients recently said:

**"The weight you've helped lift off my shoulders has been incredible. Every day I slowly feel I'm becoming me again."**



## Green fingers

Homefield Court tenants, from our High Support Accommodation Service in Bristol, made great use of their lockdown time creating a garden growing all kinds of vegetables. They're now enjoying the fruits of their labour! Meanwhile the wonderful outdoor Forest Fridays sessions are up and running again with the Community Rehabilitation team working with the Forest of Avon Trust. We hear the group are making the most of the Autumnal sunshine.



## Offline support

FLEXIBLE HELP THROUGH LOCKDOWN

\*not his real name

**Worried about Covid-19 because of his health, Christopher's\* been isolating since the start of lockdown.**

Christopher is also coping with finding it hard to read and write, which makes him all the more reliant on telephone contact with his support workers. "I've just got two services that I'm involved with: Golden Key and Second Step," said Christopher. "I usually speak to either one every day." Christopher lives at home with his dog, and he has found the regular calls from his support worker give him peace of mind. Thanks to this, he's kept really positive during lockdown: "I've got my

dog and my TV and stereo and the garden. And that colouring book has also come in handy. These things get me by."

We always support clients to connect digitally but for some, even with the right devices and some support, going online isn't the answer. "I watch the telly and see the news but it keeps telling me to go online for more information and that really gets to me," said Christopher.

**"They forget that there are people out there like me who can't read or write or use a computer."**

Alongside your support worker, there are a number of local and national telephone numbers that can help you if you're feeling isolated or need advice and you cannot go online:

**24/7 Support & Connect 0800 126 549** for people over 18 in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

**Mindline Somerset: 01823 276 892** 24 hours a day, everyday

**Bristol MindLine: 0808 808 0330** every night 7pm-11pm

**Well Aware: 0117 958 5522** 24 hours a day, everyday

**We Are Bristol: 0800 694 0184** Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun

**AWP Mental Healthcare Helpline 0300 303 1320** 24 hours a day, everyday

STOP PRESS

Poetry without words

Keep your eye out for an exciting client-led creative online exhibition launching 16 November [second-step.co.uk/poembrut](http://second-step.co.uk/poembrut)

Somerset Alliance

Open Mental Health is the name of the work being done in Somerset by a new alliance of local voluntary organisations, including Second Step, and the NHS.

The partnership's aim is to ensure everyone in Somerset gets the mental health and wellbeing support they need, when they need it.



Valuable volunteers

Kara, who volunteers with our North Somerset team, who volunteers with our North Somerset Wellbeing team, has been writing a monthly blog called 'Dear Friend' answering some mental health and wellbeing questions related to Covid-19.

"I've thoroughly enjoyed writing the Dear Friend series," says Kara. "Knowing that I might be helping someone with any struggles they might have is pleasing - and writing regularly helps my wellbeing too."

A big thank you to our volunteers who continue to provide valuable support to our services and clients during this pandemic.



Safe Haven

Our new Safe Haven crisis telephone service had 655 conversations in its first three months. The service, launched in May, has helped to provide urgent mental health support during the coronavirus outbreak. It supports people in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, and is open seven days a week from 4pm to 9.45pm.



## No going back

As part of the government's Everyone In campaign at the start of the pandemic, Bristol's homeless people were moved quickly into hotels.

Second Step and Golden Key were asked to help manage one of the new hotel hostels by Bristol City Council. The hotel housed up to 40 residents at one time, giving them food, shelter and access to support they wouldn't have had living on the streets.

Samantha Scott, Golden Key service coordinator said: "Most of the residents were feeling very low and scared when the hotel first opened. It was difficult at first, but we've

seen real improvement as time has gone on and we are hopeful to see some positive next steps." Bristol Drug Project ran a regular drop-in session at the hotel giving clients advice and medication and at the clients' request, Jamil, one of the Golden Key team joined forces with one of the hotel receptionists to organise fitness classes.

Independent Futures, Golden Key's advisory group of people with lived experience, have started to conduct interviews with clients to understand how the experience has been for them. We're now working with Bristol City Council to help people find accommodation that's right for them.

## New home for Kevin

Step Together is our ground-breaking service in Somerset which helps people with complex needs get their lives back on track. Simon, one of our recovery coaches, has been working with Kevin during lockdown to help him find a better place to live. Kevin (63) had been living in his car for five years after his building business when under. He was feeling resentful after being continually knocked back as he tried to find somewhere to live.

"Too often there can be bad communication and assumptions on both sides, especially when there are mental health issues,"

Simon helped to improve communications between Kevin and the housing services and supported him through the process of finding a permanent home. We're delighted to tell you that Kevin moved into a new home in June!

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