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New client STAR groups formed to initiate change



“Receiving a daily call encourages me.” LUCY, SAFE HAVEN CLIENT

The Safe Haven team continues to offer life-changing advice through the pandemic via telephone to people like Lucy in North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. Our plans to create a new crisis and recovery centre were put on hold when the pandemic struck, but in the last few weeks we've been working with a group of clients to design the look and feel of the centre. We are hopeful that we will be unveiling the new Safe Haven centre in Weston before too long. We will be sharing this exciting new space with the North Somerset Wellbeing Service.

Read Lucy's story on page 2.

The wellbeing and health of our clients, volunteers and staff are of utmost importance to us during the pandemic. We're following government guidelines and continue to do our best to offer our clients the support they need. To find out more, go to: second-step.co.uk and our Instagram and Twitter: [@wearesecondstep](https://www.instagram.com/wearesecondstep).

Editor's welcome

We're delighted to share the New Year issue of our Second Step newsletter, Hope. The theme for this edition is staying safe, something we've been focusing on as individuals, as an organisation and in our communities as we learn to live with the challenges of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Here you can read client stories, as well as news and highlights from the work being done by our hugely talented and dedicated staff and volunteer team.

We hope you enjoy it, and please get in touch if you'd like to share your stories and ideas: jane.edmonds@second-step.co.uk or 07841 777401.

Staying safe

THE SAFE HAVEN CRISIS TELEPHONE SERVICE GIVES LIFE-SAVING ADVICE FOR PEOPLE IN ACUTE EMOTIONAL DISTRESS.

WORDS: JANE EDMONDS
PHOTOGRAPHY: CLAIRE ROBINSON

Lucy struggles with depression and low mood. During the summer last year, things got particularly difficult when a close friend died suddenly.

Lucy was living at home with her parents in South Gloucestershire when her friend died. A month later she moved into a flat of her own. She started to really struggle with suicidal thoughts and so she called a local organisation The Elms for help. They suggested she contact the Safe Haven service through her GP.

Lucy started receiving a daily call from Safe Haven, and this continued for a number of weeks. She's got to know the staff and talks warmly about Jo and Trevor. She says they helped her with self-care, remind her to eat and check that she's taken her medication.

"They encourage me, they don't tell me what to do. It's encouragement. It's good to empty my mind at the end of every day and they help with meditation and relaxation too."

"I've been told by my sister that there's been a lot of changes in me since I've been getting the phone calls. I'm more confident and I'm able to hold conversations and they are varied conversations."

"I look forward to my support and I look forward to the phone calls. I still have thoughts about jumping off that bridge. But they really care. That's what makes the difference, when you feel they care. They're really passionate about their job. That's what helps me."

Talking helps

We've partnered with a number of mental health organisations based in Somerset to raise awareness of men's mental health.

The Somerset Men's Mental Health Project will create spaces for men to talk about their own mental health and facilitate access to local services and networks. As part of the Project, we hosted a number of listening events that brought together individuals, communities and organisations working in the men's mental health arena and in suicide prevention, including people with lived experience.

Leading suicide prevention and mental health expert Professor David Gunnell from the University of Bristol shared at one of the listening events why men are at more risk of suicide:

"Seeking help and talking about feelings can be difficult for men... and this is more difficult with social distancing and less opportunities to make social contact."



Food for thought

Our Step Together recovery coaches are pulling out all the stops to support their clients during lockdown. Dave surprised a client in Taunton by delivering a large food parcel to him on his bike to make sure he had enough supplies for the weekend.

"My client has been in hospital and finds it hard to get around. Without transport, he's isolated and I knew that getting food for the weekend might be a problem for him."

"It's about us helping out on a basic human level - he needs food, I got food to him. I couldn't secure the bags on my bike, so I took off my trouser belt and used that. Luckily my trousers stayed up!"



New mental health expertise in South Gloucestershire

When people in South Gloucestershire visit their GP with concerns about their mental health, they can now find support from one of our new recovery navigators.

The new Wellbeing and Recovery Support project supports people with complex needs who have moderate to serious mental health problems.

All support is one-to-one and mostly via telephone, though face-to-face support is also available if required.

STOP PRESS: The project is also launching in GP surgeries in Inner City & East Bristol.

Moving on

The new Specialist Community Forensic Team provides support for people in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire who have been discharged from secure inpatient units.

As part of the service, which we run with Avon and Wiltshire NHS Partnership Trust, we're also offering training and education opportunities to help people move back into the community.



New mental health learning

GP'S FROM INNER CITY & EAST BRISTOL CAN NOW PRESCRIBE WELLBEING SESSIONS AT BRISTOL WELLBEING COLLEGE IN A NEW MOVE BY HEALTH COMMISSIONERS

Thanks to a new project funded by health commissioners as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, 12 Inner City & East Bristol GP surgeries are taking part in this ground-breaking pilot.

The College runs online sessions giving learners the practical tools and skills they need to manage their mental health and wellbeing.

Sharon (above) has benefitted greatly from online learning. When lockdown started, Sharon felt overwhelmed and a friend mentioned the Bristol Wellbeing College, so she enrolled and started attending some online sessions:

“Being able to go online to the wellbeing sessions was a life-saver. I wasn't well enough to join a group in person before, but now I could. The mental health wellbeing courses and workshops gave me the tools and techniques to change my life.”

There will be up to 90 places available per month on a first come, first served, basis until March 2021. Find out more about the Bristol Wellbeing College here:

second-step.co.uk/wellbeing-colleges

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

Support & Connect:

0800 012 6549 - 24/7

Bristol MindLine:

0808 808 0330 - every night 7pm-11pm

Well Aware:

0117 958 5522 - 24/7

We Are Bristol:

0800 694 0184 - Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm and 10am-2pm Sat & Sun

Mindline Somerset:

01823 276 892 - 24/7

AWP Mental Healthcare Helpline:

0300 303 1320 - 24/7

A sense of place

One of our former clients, Freddie, is taking part in an innovative and exciting photography project about place, wellbeing and housing as part of the **Bristol Photo Festival** at the Arnolfini this Spring. Local photographer Jessie Edwards Thomas is working with him to explore his ideas of home and wellbeing.

Thank you Franco Manca

Tenants across Bristol enjoyed a tasty treat on Christmas Day with free pizza from local pizzeria Franco Manca for the third year running. We're really grateful to the support we get from our corporate friends across Bristol and further afield.

Thumbs up for coproduction

Clients from North Somerset Wellbeing Service have been meeting online as part of a new involvement approach to ensure clients ideas are an integral part of shaping the service. Thanks to those who attended, gave ideas and fed back.

Client voices heard

Involving the people who use our services in the way these services are shaped and run is a key part of what we do at Second Step. Our STAR groups operate to ensure client voices are listened to and acted upon. We've recently formed three new groups:

STAR New Business help shape our strategy and funding bids to expand what we do.

STAR Diversity help us address racism in the organisation.

STAR Wellbeing help develop the workshops, courses and materials at Bristol Wellbeing College.

STAR SHAPING
TEACHING
AND
RESPONDING

Flexible help

Working with St Mungo's and Missing Link, our new community-based mental health support service is starting to make a real difference.

Based in Bristol and working with people in their homes, the **Help When You Need It** service provides support in a flexible, tailored way.

We help people achieve their goals by looking at the barriers they face and helping to overcome them. We support people to keep their tenancies, manage their physical health and wellbeing, find work, stay safe and prevent loneliness and isolation.

Service Manager Abbey Forshaw:

"We're excited to be working in a different way, offering people support when they really need it and encouraging them to make change in their life."

We will also be setting up a client group to help shape the service and review the service's name.



Confidence boost

We're delighted that volunteer, Farran, has landed a job with Second Step as a Recovery Navigator with the Floating Support Service.

Farran started volunteering with us in July for the Get Connected service, providing telephone support to clients following discharge from the Assessment and Recovery Teams. Congratulations, Farran, and a big thank you to our volunteers who continue to provide valuable support throughout this pandemic.

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