

HeadlineZ

Newsletter from the
Independence Trust
Wellbeing Services

Issue 11: November '16

“Look for the rainbow in every storm...”

Clients from the Independence Trust in Dursley and Stroud worked together to create this picture completely out of pompoms. The idea behind it was that when you are in a dark place and you feel helpless to do anything, you should look for the positives in the situation to help you get through it. We all need to do this at some time in our lives, but when suffering from mental ill health it is a coping mechanism that becomes very important to learn.

Making the pompoms and creating the picture helped us to focus on something other than our troubles. We could concentrate on creating the picture rather than thinking about our pain, worry, bad thoughts, low mood, anxiety, stress etc. Almost everybody was able to help in some way with this project, no special skills required. We were brought together as a group and shared ideas to ensure that the picture was the best it could be. We are very happy with the end result and hope you enjoy looking at it as much as we enjoyed making it.

Jodie painstakingly applying
the many pompoms



Gloucestershire County Council is happy to continue working with the Independence Trust for a further two years. We'll continue to develop innovative and creative ways to support people with serious mental illness to lead meaningful and independent lives.

Frances Clark-Stone, Outcome Manager - Mental Health Commissioning

As an organisation we are delighted to have been given the opportunity to continue to deliver the Wellbeing Contract within Gloucestershire for a further two years. This not only gives continued stability to clients and colleagues, but also offers us the chance to continue the development of our services. We look forward to continuing our relationship with clients, colleagues and commissioners and to exploring with you innovative and creative ways of providing a service that meets the needs of those in our communities who require the support to live meaningful and independent lives.

Cynthia Kerr, Senior Operations Manager

An invite to the House of Lords

On Tuesday 12th July a small group of staff and clients took a trip to visit The Houses of Parliament. It was an early start, leaving Stroud at 6am. After a long journey on a bus with questionable suspension but an extremely friendly driver, we arrived in London.

Outside the main chamber we were greeted by Lord Paul Tyler, an appointed Liberal Democrat Lord who used to be the MP for North Cornwall but now lives in Gloucestershire. As he guided us around the building we learnt about the rich history of Westminster Palace. One spot we were shown was where Marjory Hume, a Suffragette, chained herself to a statue of Viscount Falkland. You can see the crack where his sword was broken and stuck back together to get her out! We went into the House of Lords and Lord Tyler explained how sessions in the room are orchestrated, and then we had the opportunity to go into the viewing gallery in the House of Commons and observe the members of Parliament in session. Listening to the MPs discussing different issues was incredibly interesting and I could have stayed there all day.

We all learned so much from Lord Tyler about the Government as well as some brilliant anecdotes from his time as both an MP and a Lord. The entire trip was an amazing day out and I'm so grateful that I had the chance to go. I want to thank both Lord Tyler and the Independence Trust for organising this wonderful experience.

Lola, Stroud Young Persons Group



Peer Volunteering

Hello, my name's Irene. At the end of April I completed a "peer lead development course". I really enjoyed doing this. It was very nice to meet other people from the Independence Trust in Stroud. It was held for seven weeks, two and a half hours once a week.

As it was the first training I had done in this area, I had little idea of what to expect but I learnt a lot and mostly enjoyed doing something different.

As I am writing this article, I would like to thank Simon for his work with us over the seven weeks, it was also nice to get know him and have a few laughs!

Myself and other peer leads were presented with awards on 28 April at a hotel in Gloucester. We had a very nice lunch and were made to feel very special.

I know it was a very proud moment when we were presented with our certificates.

Doing this course has enabled me to set up a small group (at present) on a Tuesday in Dursley at 1.30pm at the Market Place.

We usually have coffee at the "Bank Café" and play

board games; then if the weather is OK we go for a short walk.

So, if you are interested, please come along! You will get a warm welcome.

Irene, Peer lead Dursley



Peer Volunteer Update - Gloucester

This year we've launched the Peer Support courses and we've continued to build the Peer Development side of our Wellbeing services. We have developed the processes for peer support in the organisation (such as the processes for supervision of peer volunteers). These processes were based on a provisional peer plan that was drawn up in consultation with clients and volunteers. The idea for the Peer courses came out of a piece of action research and consultation that looked at raising capacity and the client's voice at The Independence Trust. In April we held an awards ceremony for the Peer Volunteers who had completed their training. This was an incredible confidence boost for many of the people involved and was a way of saying a big thank you for the time given to setting up groups since the launch of the Peer Development service two years ago. We evaluated the Peer courses and developed a list of recommendations from the feedback given by the volunteers who had attended. These recommendations will be fed into improving the courses (and the peer development service overall) so that we can continue to deliver services that have been co-produced and co-designed by the volunteers themselves. There has been a large amount of interest in the Peer Courses that are coming up in the near future, particularly in Cheltenham and The Forest of Dean. We hope to continue to use these courses to develop the Peer Volunteers at the Independence Trust but also to offer consultancy and bespoke courses to other organisations who would like to develop peer support within their own services.

Scott attended both the Peer Support Course and the Mental Health First Aid for Peer Volunteers.

He said: *"I have always thought that when you are feeling weak you can get lessons in being more aware of what is going on and knowing that makes you a better person. It helps you cope with problems. Thanks to the Independence Trust I have seen my goals happening more than once and I truly love who I am again because I believe I can work and be a person again."*

I am a peer lead for the walking group in Gloucester and it makes me feel like I've got a purpose in life, helping people to get some exercise and feeling good about it because I'm doing something for myself as well as helping others. I completed the peer lead training course and it has improved the way that I think. The mental health first aid training has helped me to see the signs of mental illness in myself and helps me to never go back down that road again and to stop worrying about things as much because I can recognise my own warning signs better now.

All of the training went into my head and I feel that it has made me stronger and smarter. This comes from the heart. I will continue to achieve my goals by doing more courses and training. This will help me to become more confident and happy with my good life and I look forward to a happier future. I am proud of myself and what I have achieved.

P.S More people for the walking group would be cool."

2017 promises to be an exciting time for Peer Development in the Wellbeing services at The Independence Trust.

Simon Price, Peer Coordinator



Growth

My photographs of flowers and vegetables were inspired by the hard work Russell Partridge continues to put into the garden area in the middle of quadrangle at 340 High Street, Cheltenham. I had begun taking photos for Russell so he would have a record of how his plants progressed through the months of April-September 2015.

It was a way of saying thank you for his hard work.

I have called the collection I chose from nearly 1000 photos, "Growth". This is because the photographs themselves illustrate six plants from their budding to full bloom, but it also has the connotation that both CCP and Independence Trust share in their work – helping people to grow as individuals.

I hope the collection also brightens up the café for all who use it.

Claire Smith



Art...

I have experienced first hand the healing benefits of Art, while studying for my Fine Art degree at Oxford University. I have schizo-affective disorder, and have been in six institutions due to my mental health. This has caused me to have very low self-esteem but making art helped me see that I could do things, and that I didn't need to be totally reliant on carers, family or the NHS. It gave me my independence in a certain way because I was creating work without the desire for intervention or support from others. My work was there for people to see and I felt a great sense of achievement.

This is not to say that I didn't have support from others such as tutors, and fellow artists, however they were seeing me as an artist and not as someone who could be labelled as "mad". Having mental health issues carries with it so many stigmas held by those who don't understand the conditions. Your identity becomes what other people see you as. Doing Art breaks this mould and allows you to begin to value yourself as you regain your independence and express your creativity. Making work helps you to tune into the power of freedom of speech and the realisation that your voice is as good as anyone else's is.

I now am studying for my Masters at the University of Gloucestershire in Inclusive Education, which is about providing an education that can be accessed by

everyone regardless of whether they have a mental health issue. I hope to shed some light on the dark places that we all have in our mind through my teaching and help individuals experience the healing qualities of Art. Please see photo below which shows work by David, a student in one of my classes.

Millie Metcalf



Listen

*When I ask you to listen to me,
And you start giving advice,
You have not done what I asked.*

*When I ask you to listen to me,
And you begin to tell me why I shouldn't feel that way,
You are trampling on my feelings.*

*When I ask you to listen to me,
And you feel you have to do something to solve my
problems,
You have failed me, strange as that may seem.*

Listen.

*All I ask is that you listen.
Not talk or do – just hear me.*

*I can DO for myself; I'm not helpless.
Maybe discouraged and faltering, but not hopeless.*

*When you do something for me that I can and need to
do for myself,
You contribute to my fear and weakness.*

The biggest
communication problem
is we do not listen to
understand.
We listen to reply.

*But when you accept the simple fact that I do feel what
I feel,
No matter how irrational,
Then I quit trying to convince you
and can get about the business of understanding
what's behind this irrational feeling.
And when that's clear, the answers are obvious
And I don't need advice.*

*Please listen and just hear me, and if you want to talk,
Wait a minute for your turn,
And I'll listen to you.*

Jessie Swick

Mosaic

In February of this year a group of us began making a Mosaic of the Independence Trust sign and logo to go in the Reception area. The project leader was Vicky Hendzel, who specialises in Pottery and Mosaics. There were five of us involved, Lionel, Simon, Bee, Rohenna and myself. Firstly Vicky explained to us what was proposed and showed us how to cut the ceramic tiles into small pieces using a tile cutter and snippers. None of us had any previous experience of making mosaics and it was an exciting prospect to become involved in something so creative. The basic colours were white, black and the Independence Trust shade of blue. Initially the group member's prepared small pieces of ceramic tile in the various colours ready to start assembling the lettering and background. Plastic goggles were worn for safety reasons when using the snippers to break tiles so that no damage was caused to peoples' eyes.

Once we had some small pieces ready, we were able to begin the creation of the mosaic itself and the group met for two hours each Monday afternoon to continue the project. For my own part, I had only previously used

ceramic tiles for the walls in my kitchen and bathroom, but I gained a lot of creative skills in helping to prepare the mosaic. I am sure all the other participants did too. After regular weekly sessions throughout February and March at last the group had completed the final sections of the design and this was a big moment. The only thing still to do was to grout the design. This was done using white tile grout and smoothing it between the cracks in the layout to ensure a smooth and level surface. This emphasised the lettering and layout. Once the grout had dried it was smoothed over with a cloth to remove any surplus grout and give it a nice shiny finish. This put the finishing touch to the project.

The completed sign is now ready to be fixed to a wall in Reception and is a lasting achievement for the group members and Vicky.

We are very grateful to Vicky for her encouragement and would like her to know that we do appreciate what she has done.

I would urge anyone thinking about joining this group to do so, because however little you know about mosaic art and however low your confidence is, you are quite capable of doing something you will be pleased with.

George Green



Music Making Taster Workshop

Thanks to the Studio 340 team, clients and other members of the community were able to take part in an intensive, but fun, three hour music making workshop. This workshop was an introduction to music production, lyric writing and vocal recording. The end goal was a finished recording of an original song. This session was a great example of effective group collaboration. Led by session tutors, Shaq and Stu, participants were first introduced to a DAW (Digital Audio Workstation) and music midi sequencing software in the form of Logic Pro. Stu supported Ross and Helen to create a drum beat, followed by a keyboard chord progression played by Colin and guitars played by Jenny and Richard.

After the group had created and recorded a working structure of a song, they then worked with Shaq to brainstorm lyrical ideas. They then blitzed themes for the song – the group decided on things that make them happy and people identified things that can bring happiness into their lives. Shaq asked people to write something on each area on the list.

The group then divided in two and some worked with Stu on the music production side to build the finished polished track; the others worked with Shaq to create finished lyrics in the form of one verse and a chorus. They used the sentences generated by the group as a starting point for the completed lyrics. Finally, the



lyricists worked on crafting and rehearsing a melody for the verse and chorus.

The penultimate phase involved various members of the group doing a number of vocal 'takes' (recordings) of the verse and chorus. Some were group recordings and others as individual renditions.

In the final phase, everyone witnessed Stu demonstrating how a track is mixed as he also implanted necessary edits and 'effects' like delay and reverb as suggested by the group. Also added were some strings and another drum loop to beef up the track. Hence, mission accomplished, in the form of a finished recording of a song, S.O.L. (Seasons of Life). Many of the group were so enthusiastic about the session that they asked about the possibility of further lessons in Logic Pro. Studio 340 are now in the process of getting regular group or individual lessons set up for us and another individual is considering volunteering with Studio 340.

We Travelled to Bath, We had a Laugh and Chatted with a Piranha

The Cheltenham Crew
Have done it again
This time we went
Somewhere different
Instead of the coast
A target of most
We followed the Romans
To Bath
Bath in the rain
Could be such a pain
But we managed to do
Some sightseeing
The Abbey was first
We then had a thirst
So dinner at Waitrose then followed
Next was some shopping
And then the bus, hoping

That dinner tonight would be better
Than the rubber cheese meal
That for us was no deal
And it was so we all remained
happy
With Sunday, the sun
And our travels begun
To Weston, a day at the beach
A walk on the sand
Just to get from the van
Then off to the seaquarium
We saw the Rays, found Nemo as
well
And chatted with Piranhas, who
stared
Then we split for a while
To do as we pleased

Shopping, hotdogs or perhaps
The Big Wheel
At 4.30 we met
At the van on the beach
We'd all had a jolly good time
Then back to the hotel
For our final cooked meal
(And someone had too much red
wine!)

This holiday's done
And I for one
Will be saving towards the next one
Broken toilets and lights
And TV's apart
I wouldn't have missed it
For anyone

By Karen Griffin Hill

Exmouth Holiday 2016

Where to begin? Maybe Gordano Services where we all met up – breakfast, cups of tea/coffee, a look around the shops before travelling, in convoy, down to Exmouth. Stopping for lunch and then on to the hotel.

For me this weekend away was an important, appreciated and valuable break. For many of us it is the only time away from home. Equally it's an opportunity to 'do' normal everyday things that are sometimes, at the very best, difficult and for some impossible.

There were many varied things to do – some suggestions from staff, others our own individual choices. Boat trip, the musical Grease, walks along the beach, visiting the town. Also evening entertainments including quizzes, music and games (creating much laughter). There is probably much more but my memory is somewhat lacking.

Despite the fact the staff worked 24/7, they were always there, available and seemingly effortlessly and always with a smile helped create a relaxed safe space which served to increase my enjoyment of the weekend.



As well as being on holiday, for me, it was also a way to cement old friendships and forge new ones. It was a time of enjoyment and letting go of some of the detritus of day to day life in a safe and supportive environment. Of realising that despite my mental ill health, there is life beyond that and these times I cherish.

It was a very enjoyable weekend, relaxed but also with plenty to do and see.

Roll on holiday 2017!

Johanna Timson

Our Holiday in Exmouth

"I had such a nice time. I would not normally go on holiday, but it's different going with Inde Trust, as I know that there will be Staff there to help me and give me the confidence to go."

"I had a smashing time! It was really good to be with friends from Inde Trust!"

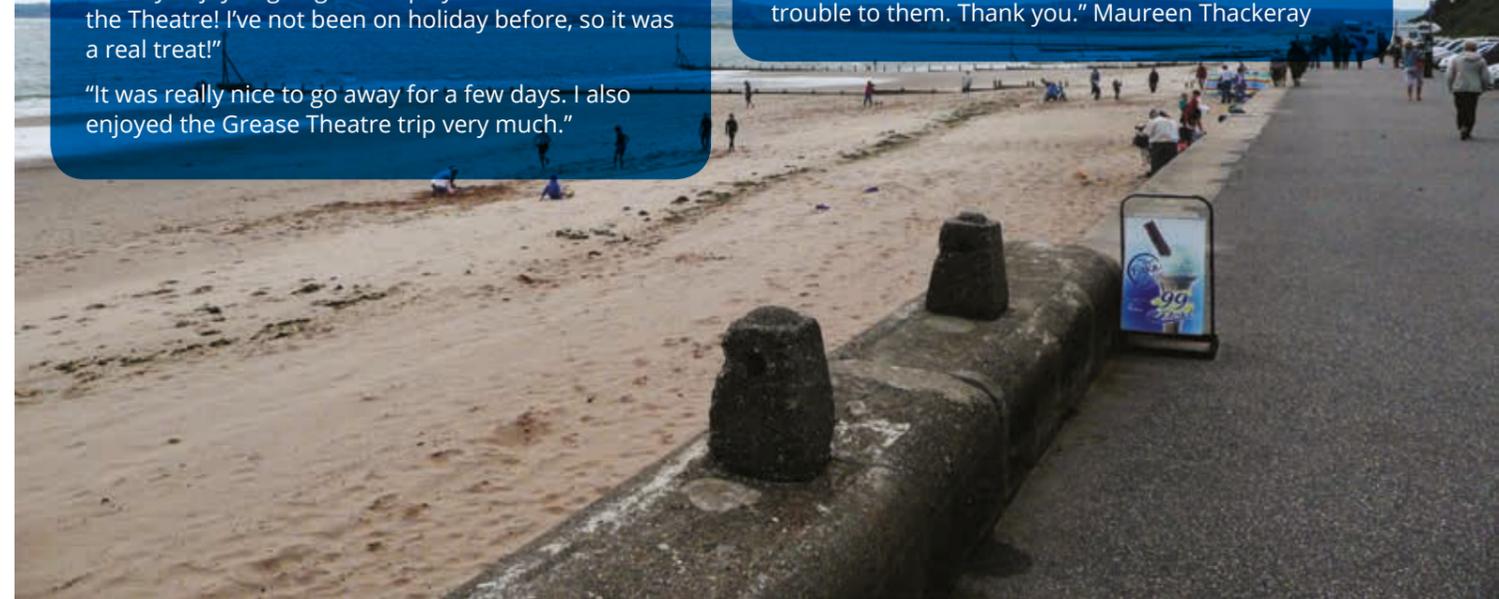
"I really enjoyed going to Torquay to see Grease at the Theatre! I've not been on holiday before, so it was a real treat!"

"It was really nice to go away for a few days. I also enjoyed the Grease Theatre trip very much."

"It was lovely to get away for a few days, as I wouldn't get away otherwise."

"It's been nice to talk to people in Inde Trust about their holiday. One client now feels confident enough to go away on the Client holiday next year, and this is a really big step forward for him."

"This was my third holiday with Independence Trust. I had a lovely time, from the journey there and back, to the lovely excursions that the Staff organised. We saw Grease the Musical, which was just up my street – I love live shows! The boat trip around the Jurassic Coast was also great, and we had a little time to go shopping, too. I would like to thank the Staff – they were first class and nothing seemed too much trouble to them. Thank you." Maureen Thackeray



The Elephant in the Room Nature in Art Exhibition

For several months now, the 'halls' of the South Team's Centres have been buzzing with creativity as the Clients, Staff, Volunteers and external Tutors have painted, stuck, nailed, printed, knitted, and generally created many wonderful pieces of art to display in our Nature in Art Exhibition.

The months of preparation for our Exhibition brought many Clients together with a common sense of purpose. Laughter was generally to be heard amongst the groups creating the artwork and as the date of the Exhibition neared, the sense of anticipation and excitement increased. Ideas were exchanged for new projects and amendments/additions made to current ones – no idea went unconsidered.

On the day before the grand opening, Anni led a group of Clients, Staff, Volunteers and loved ones in the setting up of the Exhibition at Nature in Art in Twigworth, Gloucester. It was a group with mixed artistic abilities, from major to minor, but despite this, the enthusiasm levels were all on a par. Under Anni's gentle but firm instruction and guidance, the display of artwork began to take shape, and everyone marvelled at the skills of our Client Group and also at Anni's vision in proposing the Exhibition. Again, there was an underlying sense of excitement and anticipation. By the end of a long and hot day, the results, everyone agreed, were incredible.

At 10.00am on a very sunny Tuesday 16th August, we were proud and excited to open the doors of our Nature in Art Exhibition to the general public.

This physical and metaphorical opening of the doors also signified the launch of our Elephant in the Room Campaign to tackle the stigma which surrounds Mental Ill Health.



Anni, Kathryn, Jodie, Sally Sue, Linda



Painting the elephant is a mammoth job!
Sean from Dursley



Sally and Linda making "the tail"

At 4.00pm on that same day, after much preparation in many homes around Stroud and Nailsworth, and also in the stiflingly hot kitchen, Staff, Clients and Volunteers alike welcomed many VIP's to our Exhibition. Afternoon tea was served to all, and Sue T made a stirring welcome speech, followed by a moving speech by a very courageous Anni. All were then encouraged to peruse the Exhibition and sign the Elephant to indicate their support of reducing the stigma which surrounds Mental Ill Health. Many of the VIP's were in awe at the high standard of the artwork, and frequently asked to be introduced to 'The Artists'. Red dots began to appear on the artwork, signalling that they had been sold, and this applied to the whole range of artwork! The Elephant and The Rainbow in the Storm pom-pom picture both created much discussion, speculation and engagement!

And so it went on....our Exhibition ran for 2 whole weeks, 6 days a week, and each and every day members of the public flooded in. Without exception, they were 'blown away' by the quality of the artwork. In addition to that, most people engaged in conversations about Mental Ill Health with the Staff, Clients and Volunteers manning the Exhibition, sometimes sharing moving stories of their own, and often saying how glad they were that someone is offering help and support to those experiencing Mental Ill Health, and even, on occasion, asking for the contact details of Inde Trust for either themselves, or their loved ones.

The Elephant in the Room Nature in Art Exhibition was a perfect example of co-production. From the seeds of an idea from a Client, to the magnificence of the full Exhibition, every step of the way was discussed, developed and created by Staff, Clients, Volunteers and external Tutors working together, side-by-side.

Much of the artwork will now be adorning the walls of new owners, whilst other pieces will adorn the walls of our Centres, reminding us of the fun as well as the success of this project. The Elephant will take a short break in its new 'stable', before moving around the County with us to help spread the word that Mental Ill Health is nothing to be ashamed about, and should be treated with equal respect to that which Physical Ill Health receives.



We went into mass production designing and printing our "Elephant in the room" bags they were so successful we sold out, next production starting soon. Order yours now!

And so to sum up...the Nature in Art Exhibition and the launch of the Elephant in the Room Campaign against the Stigma surrounding Mental Ill Health were both major successes, with over one thousand pounds worth of art sold and the proceeds going straight to the artists themselves. Each and every one of us who played a part in this huge project, no matter how small, should be very proud.

We can now all take a bit of a well-earned breather, before beginning preparations for next year's Exhibition....!



PETER HOLDEN

I have attended Shelley's Art Group for several years. I suffer from Mental Health problems, and I find the Art Group beneficial.

ANTHONY KNOWLES

Four Birds - £50.00

I go to Shelly's Art Group, which I enjoy. It helps me with my Mental Health problems. I like to draw nature the most.

CLAUDIA STUCHEY

Shelly's Art Group has reignited my passion for art and creativity and given me a purpose to my life. My aim is to become a proper artist as my future profession.

SANDRA MCEVOY

I have been attending Art Group for a few years now, and find it stimulating, yet also relaxing. It is a very sociable Group!

ELAINE TURNER

Art helps me to express myself, and it contributes to my wellbeing. I am a Grandmother and I can help my Granddaughter with her art. I have been doing art for 8 years under Shelly's direction and I have improved with age.

OLIVIA LEE

Dancing Flowers

I've been coming to this Art Group for the last few months and have fallen in love with being creative again! I did an Art and Design B-Tech a few years ago. I have suffered with health problems and doing my artwork has made me relax and have something 'fun' to do with my time. I am hoping to go on some art courses and make a career for myself in the art world!

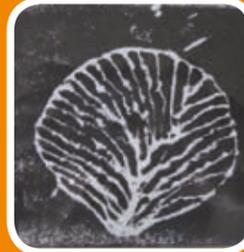
JAYNE BAYLISS

I was always told at school that I couldn't draw, but I have found a release in working in Shelley's Art Group, doing things that I never thought I could!



SAM JONES

I'm Sam and I have Autism, ADHD and Learning Difficulties. I started art with Independence Trust 2 years ago. It makes me feel relaxed and fulfilled and I like it when people praise my artwork.



JEANETTE CIRENCESTER

I like Independence Trust art classes because they help me with my illness. I enjoy learning new craftwork and meeting my new friends. Our art teacher, Millie, is excellent.



VAL CIRENCESTER

Art helps me to keep distracted and less aware of my feelings of depression and anxiety.



TINA - CIRENCESTER

Art can be many different things, but it can help to concentrate on something nice when you aren't feeling too good. It can also be good to remember the things you draw and the colours can help, too.

DANNY CIRENCESTER

I enjoy doing art. I paint with oil, acrylics and watercolours. The thing that pleases me most is the appreciation and comments from other people. The fact that other people enjoy my work makes it worthwhile. The work I do at Independence Trust is very interesting and I learn new techniques all the time. Art is a lot more than just drawing and painting.

SEAN DURSLEY

I have really enjoyed the Elephant in the Room project. Millie, our Tutor, listens, encourages us to experiment and is really open to different ideas. It has helped me to be less anxious and stressed whilst doing it.

I like creating things. I much prefer projects like the Elephant - to see things through from the start was great - it wasn't a rigid project, it evolved as we went along, with people chipping in with their ideas. We all had a laugh whilst doing it and everyone got on really well. There was a great mixture of people helping out, and I really enjoyed it.

When I'm doing art, it's like a break from my feelings and what I'm thinking. I find it therapeutic. I like to go with the flow, think about what I want and let it develop from there.

I also do stained glass work. I like looking at a pattern and experimenting with different colours. I started working with stained glass around two years ago, and in that time, I have completed a College Course, which has enabled me to develop new skills which I am now using. I am hoping to learn fusing next.

The Elephant in the Room project, and my own artwork, really help me manage my Mental Ill Health.

MARK DURSLEY

Art for me helps me to feel happy - it lifts my mood. When I was not working on the Elephant in the Room project, I was planning and thinking ahead to make sure we had the right tools for the job. That's good - I need to plan ahead sometimes. I don't mind sharing my skills with the others. I got so involved with the project, and focussed so much on it, that sometimes I didn't get the chance to talk to others much!

I am looking forward to seeing the Elephant out and about, and seeing people's reactions to it, because it's about Mental Ill Health and people don't realise how suffering from that stops you from living a "normal" life. You can't just do what you want - you have to put on a brave face and do your best. You may never have experienced Mental Ill Health before, but it can come creeping up on you and then you find yourself becoming very unwell. It ruins your life.

ANGELA HOSKINS

I have been involved in the Elephant in the Room Exhibition as a Client and Service User, and it has come along at a time when I have been in crisis, and has helped to occupy my mind AND my hands, which has

consequently been very healing for me, allowing the creative part of my mind to come to the fore and override the destructive part.

I have helped make some pom-poms for the Rainbow, helped to construct it (a labour of love!) made stencils for and stencilled and ironed the canvas bags both at the Stroud Independence Trust premises with Sue, and also at home, ably assisted by my husband, who is very happy to 'give something back' to the Stroud Staff, who he is so very impressed with. I have also made cards, tags, flowers to stick onto gift bags and generally helped and offered my ideas with this Exhibition. All

of these things have been given value by the Staff and other Clients, and this has certainly increased my sense of self-worth and wellbeing.

I have made a giant leap in moving from my recent crisis to actually feeling some lightness of mood and a little bit better about myself, partly due to having the opportunity to be a part of something so important and meaningful, and I am even feeling a little bit excited that I am a part of the efforts to overcome the stigma and misunderstandings around Mental Ill Health.



Mental Health Myth Busters (unscrabbling the myths of mental illness)

One evening each month, from February until July, Jo Timson and I - Sarah Stephenson - co-facilitated the Myth Busters talks in the Black Book Café in Stroud.

These sessions were publicised as 'A discussion and information group covering different Mental Health conditions'. What this meant, in practice, was that, each month, Jo and I wrote a talk on a different Mental Health condition and printed out 'useful contacts' for each condition. We then 'set up shop' in the Black Book Café, and waited to see who would turn up! It was fascinating seeing the difference in attendance for each of the different topics; the two best attended sessions were Anxiety & Panic Attacks and Bi-Polar, followed by Self Harming and then Depression. It was also fascinating noting how writing about each topic affected our own moods!

Once 'the Public' had arrived, bought a drink and settled themselves down, Jo and I presented our talk in a very informal manner. We then encouraged our audience to join in, by either asking questions, or by sharing stories, coping strategies, experiences and the like. We were really pleased with the way that, each week, people always joined in.

Our audiences comprised of a mix of professionals from within the field of Mental Health/Mental Health Support those with mental health conditions also

those of the public interested in finding out more about mental health. Those who attended thanked us, saying that they had learned something of value from attending, and many also said that it was a comfort to learn that they were not alone.

Due to the success of the Stroud Myth Busters Group, and at the request of various Mental Health professionals, Jo and I are planning a re-run of our talks, but this time we will be in Nailsworth on Monday afternoons, starting at the end of October.

If you, or anyone you know, would like more information, please contact Sarah Stephenson on 07815 107471.



And it's good bye from me...

For many years now, I have been supported by Independence Trust, and been enabled and supported to grow towards the place I am now at.

Independence Trust has given me everything; it has been life changing for me. I don't want to say they've kept me alive, because that sounds pathetic, but they have! Survival is about being able to be yourself to your best ability and 'using' the staff who are there. Don't wait! The other Clients are a great support, as well. Honesty is the biggest hurdle for most people, but within Inde Trust, you can choose the person to be honest with and they will listen and respect that, and help, where possible. I don't have anyone outside here - I'm isolated. I've used Tyndale to make a life for myself.

I'm looking forward to the next chapter of life, living in Cornwall. You only get what you ask for and you need to put something in, as well as take things out. You need to be upfront and honest with everyone - self and others - if you hide it, how can anyone help you?

I don't think there's anything else to say really - that's enough. **Richard**



The Weavers Independence Project

The Weavers Independence Project is initially starting off as a Gardening group. The Young Persons Group, which is aimed at young people who are experiencing anxiety and/or depression, will also use the Summer House as the base for their weekly sessions. There are also plans for a Men's Shed Group later in the year.

We hope and plan that all of the Groups running under the umbrella of the Weavers Independence Project complement and feed into each other. For example, the Men's Shed could make wooden compost bins to be used by the Gardening Group, which would mean that the ongoing running costs of the Gardening Group would be reduced, due to not having to purchase shop-bought compost; the Young Person's Group is in the process of decorating the interior of the Summer House, thus improving the general ambiance for all.

Our vision for our Gardening Group is to produce fresh seasonal herbs and vegetables, as well as flowers and plants. Any crops which we grow can be sold to Clients, Staff at Weavers Croft and Independence Trust and also sold on the market stalls we run as part of engaging with the local community to reduce the stigma of poor Mental Health. Any funds raised from the sale of produce can then be re-invested in the gardening group.

Some of our clients have vast experience and expertise in horticulture, and they also know the benefit of finding a tranquil space in which to work alongside peers and create something really beautiful and productive. Growing vegetables and flowers is not only beneficial to their physical and mental health, but we also hope that taking part in the project will open up a whole new social connection for people.

We are also looking for donations of garden equipment for example, wellies, waterproof lightweight coats, gardening gloves, as well as tools. If you could help with any of these we will be running The Weavers Garden Project every Tuesday from Weavers Croft, Field Road, Stroud, GL52HZ.

If you know of anyone who may be interested in joining the Weavers Independence Project, or if you would like any further information, please call 01453 767999 or Email stroudhub@independencetrust.co.uk



Stroud Young Person's Group

The second Stroud Young Person's Group is now successfully up and running. It is facilitated by both a Staff member and a Peer Volunteer and runs for two hours each Wednesday afternoon.

Each Group sets its own rules, goals and activities schedule, according to the members' individual needs. On arrival each week, once we have all got a drink and taken a seat, the colouring sheets normally come out and everyone puts their heads down and becomes creative. Whilst doing this, we each discuss how our week has been, including the good, as well as the bad bits. If necessary/appropriate/wanted at this point, we discuss as a Group things like coping strategies, or possible alternative options for situations. Each week, we tend to 'go with the flow' of whatever anyone brings to the session. The constant, however, is the staffing and the relaxed atmosphere.

Some of our Young People recently joined the other South Team Clients on a Trip to Westminster Palace (see article by Lola).

At present, the Group has 'moved house' to Weavers Croft, where we are decorating the interior of the Summerhouse there in preparation for the Weavers Independence Project. It is planned that, as well as

the upcoming Gardening Group benefitting from the Group's artistic skills, our Group itself will, as we intend to run weekly from the Summerhouse instead of from the Wellbeing Centre. The Group have also helped to make coasters to sell at the Nature in Art Exhibition, and some also made a pom-pom or two for the magnificent Rainbow in the Storm pom-pom picture! Several of our members are working on Personal Journals, and often the artwork they complete in the Group goes into their Journals.

Our Young People have said that it is really beneficial to them to know that they can come along each week, however they are feeling and whatever their week has been like, and just spend a couple of hours feeling safe, relaxed and unjudged.

If you know of anyone aged 17-24 who may benefit from joining our Group, please ask them to contact Sarah Stephenson on 07815 107471.



Congratulations

Congratulations to the Independence Trust (South Team) on becoming a finalist of the Community Services Team of the Year at the Gloucestershire Health and Social Care Awards 2016.

Much excitement at the Stroud Wellbeing Centre when a film crew turned up to make a short film about why the team were nominated for the award. A big thank you to all involved.



Heads Up Cheltenham – Positive Thought, Positive Action, Positive Life

Heads Up Cheltenham is a year of action to raise awareness of mental health issues and promote good mental health across the town.

Each month activities and events will be based around a theme with Independence Trust supporting the campaign throughout the year.

Independence Trust attended the launch of the campaign on World Mental Health Day and took along the “Elephant in the Room” to help draw attention and to support the kick off of the campaign along with the CCG bus and information stand supported by various organisations. Members of the Cheltenham and Stroud Hub supported the event. There was great interest with the Elephant a real show stopper - just what the elephant was designed to do!

Heads Up Cheltenham is also being supported by Cheltenham Borough Council, 2gether Trust, Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, People

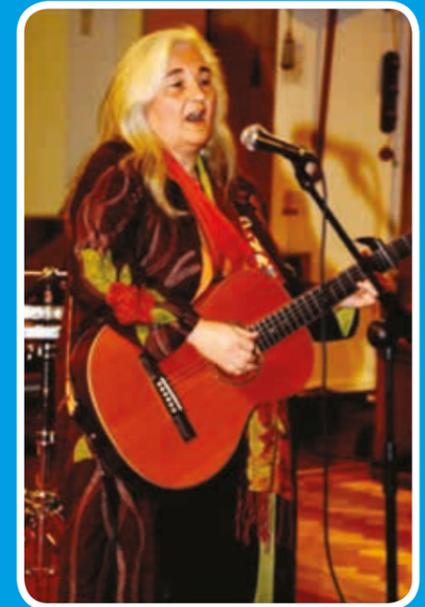


& Places, Trust in You, Cheltenham Borough homes, the Cheltenham Trust and Gloucestershire Rural communities Council.

Music festival fundraiser

Every other year, St Georges' Church in Nailsworth hosts a musical fundraising evening for a local organisation. This year, thanks to some nifty plugging by Linda Carter, the organisation which benefited was the Independence Trust. A variety of local musicians from bands to singer songwriters to classical singers performed at the event.

Among them was our own Alison Hustwitt, who moonlights as a musician when not working as a Community Recovery Worker for Inde Trust. Alison stepped in to help with the organising as well. The event also provides a great platform to launch the expansion to Nailsworth of Independence Trust's successful “Mental Health Myth Busters” sessions, which Sarah Stephenson and Johanna Timson will be running in Nailsworth. Local people attending the festival were pleased to hear we will be running sessions in the near future within their town.



Perpendicular People

Amanda Griffin

Those perpendicular people
Claim to be 'straight up'
They come across, as well you know,
Just to trip you up.

Give me 360° people,
I am one of those,
Well rounded, smooth but solid
And our view will always please.

The ritual of healing,
The perpetual renew.
The never-ending journey,
The development of you.

360° people do this-
Go around and around again,
Bending over backwards
To bring happiness and gain.

Perpendicular people,
Into a corner they will back you,
With promises of understanding
And then they will attack you.

Stroud Goodwill evening



Friday, 2 December 2016

Visit our stall for hand crafted gifts,
homemade fudge, candy floss

Plus those unique gifts for the person
who has everything

Call 01453 767999 for more details.

Wise Words

Amanda Griffin

Telling a person with depression to cheer up
is about as useful as telling a blind man to
open his eyes.

But telling a person with depression you
care and are there to listen if they need to
talk, is like giving a blind man a guide dog.

Heads up Cheltenham is a year of
action

bringing the whole Town together to make all
our lives a little bit better

Positive Action Positive Thought
Positive Life



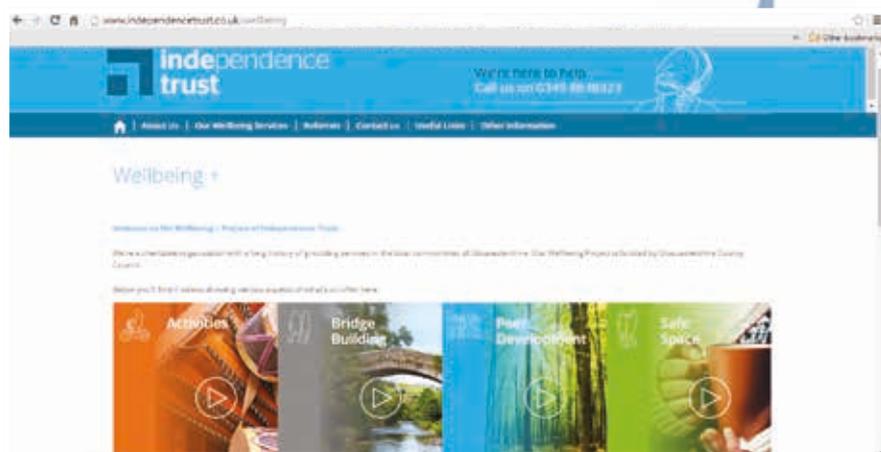
It's easy to forget how important looking after our mental health is.
So to make our Town a better place to live and work we are joining together in
a year of action to encourage good mental health

We'd love you to join us
Find out more and get involved

Wellbeing Plus Prospectus



There are over 130 activities, courses and taster sessions on offer within our prospectus. From finding a safe space, making new friends to learning new skills you may like to try reflexology, photography or a confidence course. The list is extensive. Why not have a look at our website for the full list.



Please note that some of our offices have recently moved. Our addresses are below:

Cheltenham
340 High Street (01242) 512812

Forest of Dean
Colliers Court, Latimer Road, Cinderford (01452) 317460

Cirencester
Ashcroft Rooms, 21 Ashcroft Road and The Bothy, Ashcroft Road (01453) 767999

Dursley
Tyndale Centre (01453) 767999

Moreton-in-Marsh
50 Jameson Court (01242) 512812

Stroud
Parliament Street (01453) 767999

info@independencetrust.co.uk
www.independencetrust.co.uk

Christmas Day at the Friends Meeting House, Gloucester

On Christmas Day we are offering the opportunity for a lively and festive get together in the afternoon with turkey stuffing rolls and refreshments.

This will only go ahead if we have enough interest. If you are interested then we are taking a small deposit of £5 which will cover the cost of all refreshments. If you are interested then please let either Klara or Alan know on 01452 317465 by November 25th.

