

Safeguarding Voice Group Newsletter



- ❖ The Safeguarding Voice Group last met in March 2020 – just before Covid lockdown restrictions came in. However, the 3rd September saw the first virtual meeting of this group via a WebEx conference call.
- ❖ This last 6 months have been a really challenging period of time, bringing feelings of isolation and loneliness to many. Normal activities have had to be paused, along with cancellation of regular user group meetings. It has also brought different working practices to many of our group
- ❖ We have been extremely proud and delighted to hear how our individual members/ service user groups have, in these difficult times, still managed to think positively and creatively to help themselves. They have done this within their own organisations and also reaching to others within the Bradford district and beyond - to develop ways to help themselves and others cope with these strange times.
- ❖ We know that for some, the use of technology has meant new challenges to keep in touch with the outside world – sometimes because of their own circumstances and sometimes, the availability of laptops/smartphones to actually take part in the Zoom and WebEx meetings that many of us are now becoming so used to. For some people, this has also been the first time using Zoom and WebEx and social media. The Safeguarding Voice ‘virtual’ meeting welcomed many regular faces – but badly missed the input of some, such as Mahmood (...amongst many others), who is always an extremely engaged and dedicated attendee at our ‘normal’ meetings.
- ❖ It is really amazing to hear about the work that has been taking place over this last 6 months - overcoming personal difficulties to help others stay connected and supported. As such, we feel it is really important to share some of the experiences and creative work that is taking place to help stop feelings of loneliness and isolation and stay connected and supported as well as providing user friendly advice on staying safe in these strange and difficult times.

As such, we proudly present.....

BRITISH BAKE OFF STAR OF THE FUTURE?



..... Guess who will be baking the buns when we have our next 'normal' meeting!!

Damian has been keeping busy baking and we can't wait to sample his cakes! Damian has also been really involved in the People First Bradford WhatsApp Group by providing demos and guides on the correct way to wear a mask, avoiding scammers (particularly to those new to social media) and staying safe on the internet. He is providing a fantastic service by being the first to pick up on new laws and government guidelines and share these on social media in a really user friendly way.

.....RISING STAR OF SOCIAL MEDIA BROADCASTING, HELPING OTHERS TO STAY CONNECTED AND SUPPORTED



Catrina, from People first Keighley, found it difficult in the first weeks of lockdown and so has helped others by producing activity books, volunteering to provide support and advice to others and even producing podcasts to share information – all with a focus on mental health.

Catrina has a particular interest in safeguarding issues affecting those in a vulnerable situation and we look forward together.

BROADCASTING A POSITIVE IMAGE OF LIVING WITH DISABILITY TO 160 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES



Whilst admitting to feelings of isolation and depression caused by lockdown, Imtiaz has been able to continue broadcasting on Asian TV. New technology links have enabled him to continue presenting his programme to 160 different countries. His programme is live and interactive, featuring discussions on health issues and what different organisations are doing to help service users. The programme also promotes a positive image of those living with disability. Imtiaz has invited Safeguarding Voice group member organisations such as People First Bradford/Keighley to join an edition of the programme.

NEWSLETTERS, BLOGS AND STAYING CONNECTED



Adam has experienced big changes to his everyday lifestyle. Before Covid, he used to stay active by going to the gym, swimming and dancing each week but has been trying to stay positive and help others. He has continued working at the NHS People's Board and was asked to run a blog within the newsletter. Adam is using social media to talk to friends and meet with people. He appreciates that there are others in a far worse situation - understanding the isolation that some people experience all year round. Adam is a member of Diabetes UK and is kindly sending round details of the next virtual meeting of this group so that others living with diabetes can become involved.

EASY READS, KEEPING RESIDENTS SAFE..... AND PUBS!



Anne Marie's normal working life at Carlton Care changed completely at the start of lockdown - but has been making sure that guidance and rules are shared with staff and service users. The team have additionally developed easy read versions of guidance – due to the difficult content of some documents usually available. Although really difficult, she and her team remain focussed on Covid and keeping people in care safe. The fact that cinemas and shops have been shut has affected service users badly – although on a positive note, one care home turned the lounge into a pub, with beer mats etc. showing how creatively her team are working!

HELPING OTHERS KEEP CONNECTED



Gill considered herself to be quite lucky because she lives with her husband and has a garden – but does miss her grandchildren. She has however experienced worries about not being able to visit the hospital for appointments and check-ups. The hospital had set up a helpline to answer questions and if necessary brought patients in to see a doctor. Gill normally chairs a number of meetings (Equality Together and Burley Good Neighbours) as well as working with the University - and this has been difficult when Zoom meetings are the only option. The staff at Equality Together worked from home to continue providing their service during lockdown – and had lots of calls for help. The Manningham Mills office is now

open again under strict rules - with some staff still working from home. The staff have done a brilliant job during these awful times – so a big ‘thank you’ to all! Gill also ensures she rings members regularly to check on their wellbeing.

KEEPING PEOPLE FIRST BRADFORD MEMBERS ACTIVE, SAFE AND POSITIVE



Lynn explained that in some ways the experience has been positive - with people learning to work creatively - as they have had to change the way they work completely. WhatsApp, Zoom and standard telephone calls have been used to keep connected with people and offer guidance on staying safe.

People First Bradford work closely with Equality Together and People First Keighley and have a Facebook page – ‘Stay Home, Stay Safe’ which includes games and exercises aiming to keep people active and positive. For people who could not stay connected by social media they distributed wellbeing packs and individually tailored mail outs which included interactive activities and easy read information about Covid helping to keep people safe and improve their health and mental wellbeing.

In June, Simon Philips from the Police had run a Zoom session. Those joining the session asked questions to check their understanding about testing, travelling on buses, social distancing, social gatherings, tracking and tracing, PPE, and Covid generally. At the end of September the Safer Team from Yorkshire Trading Standards will be running a scam training session to alert members to online risks and dangers

Lynn is really proud of how the members of Bradford People First have kept connected and supported each other. Lynn thanked Damian for being really fantastic at coming on-line and letting people know about new rules – such as mask wearing in shops and on public transport - and giving advice on scams. Katie has been fantastic at keeping everyone organised and reminding everyone about meetings.

QUIZZES, ON-LINE ETIQUETTE AND MORE....



Sam, Catrina and People First Keighley have been doing a lot of work about keeping safe on social media as this had been first time some members had used this. 24 hour access and the volume of possible contact on social media have raised some issues around social etiquette on such apps. There has been a lot to learn, but it has mainly been a positive

experience. Social media has been an ideal way to keep members feel supported and connected - along with sharing really important information and guidance on many aspects of 'the new normal' including hand washing and how to wear masks correctly. They have been running regular quizzes and members have been given tablets to stay in touch. They have also produced activity packs with a focus on mental health.

SUMMARY

- It's fair to say that we were all so happy and proud to hear of the creative ways the Safeguarding Voice Group has been dealing with lockdown. The positivity and inspired thinking around keeping themselves and others safe, staying active and staying is amazing.
- However we also understand some of the deep frustration and anxiety felt by some as lockdown has meant regular social activities and meetings could not take place – as well as not being able to see family and friends.
- Using and accessing technology remains a problem for a number of our group. It's such a shame that many, such as Mahmood, were not able to join the virtual meeting. Mahmood is normally a really active member of the group, but struggles to access technology – which was really sad as he enjoys the 'buzz' that the normal meeting of this group brings.

FUTURE PLANS FOR OUR WORK FOR THE NEXT 6 MONTHS

- ❖ A regular newsletter to capture not only the positive stories about creative work to stay connected and protect mental health and wellbeing, but to also highlight the frustrations and impact both Covid and lockdown has had on many of our lives.
- ❖ Continuation of individual work on easy reads and videos to give the right level of information about the latest government guidance and rules.
- ❖ Using positive experiences to help us look at trying to lessen the feelings of isolation experienced by many – including tips for staying well connected.
- ❖ Researching and sharing creative ways of contacting/ befriending those who are 'hard to reach' (those who are not computer savvy/ unable to use available technology without help - or don't have the technology to do so) - for the group itself and in turn, influence or contribute to work being done in the district as a whole.
- ❖ Additional group work on keeping people safe covering:
 - social media
 - etiquette
 - scams and protecting ourselves online
 - avoiding people taking advantage of the isolated and vulnerable
 - How to check that people were safe and not affected
 - podcasts about safeguarding the vulnerable and disabled
- ❖ Arrange for Yorkshire Training to speak to the group about staying safe on-line etc.
- ❖ To look at additional training on social media offered by 'People Can'.