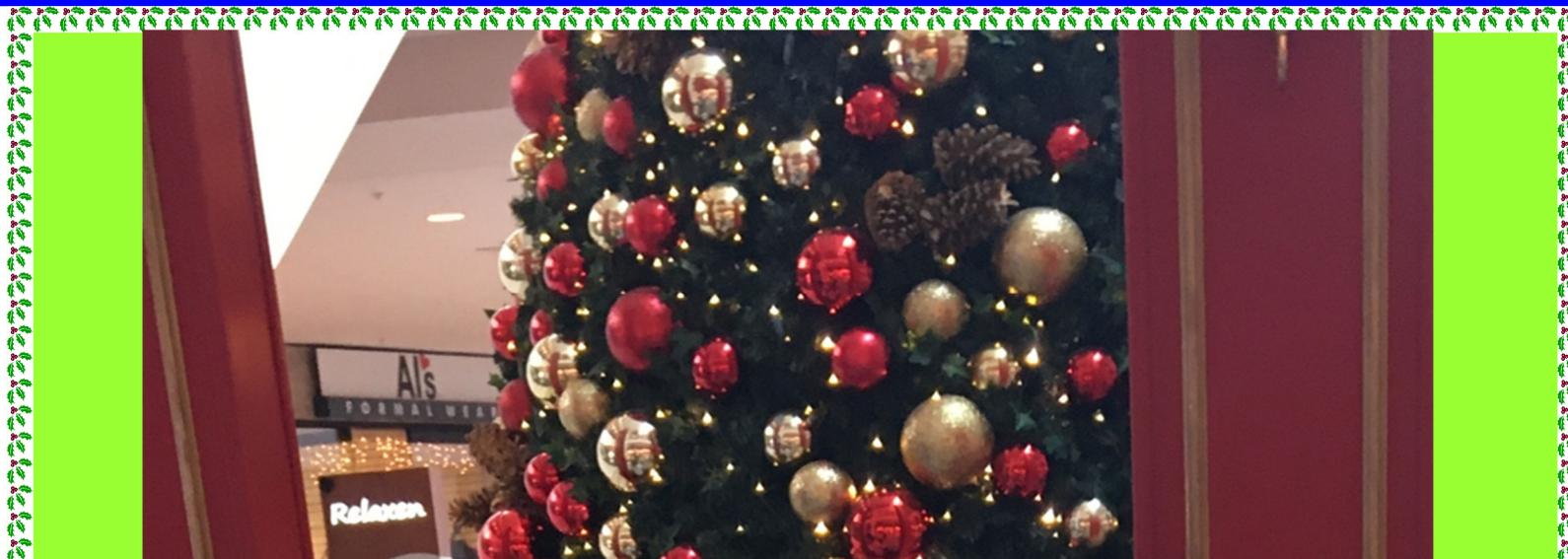




# Herefordshire Disability United Network News

Christmas 2020

Celebrating





We welcome articles from individuals and organisations to promote their stories or interests.  
Please contact the Editor..... details on the back page.

## Editorial:

It's the first time HDU have produced a "Christmas Edition", and I trust you'll forgive the personal indulgence of using a family photo on the cover, I have permission.

This time last year I was in Houston, Texas where my family now reside. Becky my eldest grand daughter and I were taking Bella, her daughter to see Father Christmas for the first time. Bella was a week away from her second birthday.

We arrived at the shopping mall and waiting for the queue to start moving, I took a couple of snapshots before the limitations of moving into the grotto. It was just as well, for as Bella saw Father Christmas she became nervous, and sitting on his lap, burst into tears. Unfortunately, that is what the "official" photographs show ....but such is life!

So we move on, and like many families affected by Covid, this year we look at the positive things that have got us through, for better things to come, and the hope that we can visit each other as soon as sensible. Do read the articles in this edition to inspire, bring hope and add knowledge. **Merry Christmas!!**

.....

Still on the American theme, something which recently brought a smile to my face whilst watching **ABC 13 Houston news** (I've downloaded their app). They ran a piece on "Emotional Support animals" which accompany passengers on flights, in order that the passengers are comfortable and can relax whilst in the air.

flights, in order that the passengers are comfortable and can relax whilst in the air.

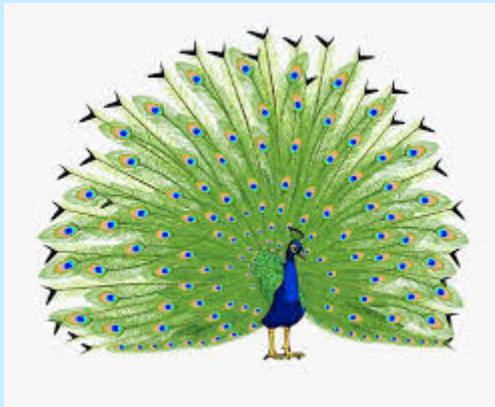
The News Anchor announced that airlines have agreed to rationalise on the type of animals permitted to fly as “Emotional Support” to ..... **just dogs.**

Previously these three animals had accompanied travellers on flights!



**A miniature pony,**

**a pig**



and of all animals, a **peacock.**

They even showed the holidaymaker who walked through the departure lounge with a peacock riding high on her shoulders!!!

**The Editor**

## HDU newsletter contents and information

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Are you feeling vulnerable?  
Do you need to talk to  
somebody now?



If you are experiencing  
feelings of distress or  
despair, including those  
which could lead to suicide,  
you can call  
[the Samaritans](#).

Herefordshire Disability United (HDU) is an organisation that has developed to voice the concerns of disabled people, and to provide a platform where disability issues can be raised and policies developed.

HDU is run by people with disabilities for people with disabilities. It was started in January 2011, and has grown to be an acknowledged organisation representing service users, and their families fighting for a better future and understanding.

HDU take part in consultations to highlight issues that affect persons with disabilities.

Our networking is effective with representation via public sector officialdom, providers and the third sector, local and national businesses to improve their practices and policies.

We are a democratic, non sectarian, non party political organisation, stimulating discussion to improve outcomes for disabled people.

[the Samaritans.](#)

CALL FREE ON

116 123

**Editorial or advertising queries:**

Contact the editor on 07817 473813 or email : [info@hdu.org.uk](mailto:info@hdu.org.uk)

**Contact:**

**Herefordshire Disability United**

welcomes any feedback on Network News, or any of the services it provides.

**Disclaimer:**

The views expressed in Network News are not necessarily those of Herefordshire Disability United.

## When Just the Tide Went Out

Last night as I lay sleeping  
When dreams came fast to me  
I dreamt I saw Jerusalem  
Beside that tideless sea

And one dream I'll remember  
as the stars began to fall  
Was Bansky painting Alun Wyn  
On my neighbour's garage wall

And dreams like that sustain me  
Til these darkest times have passed  
And chase away the shadows  
No caring night should cast

But times like this can shine a light  
As hardship often can  
To see the best in people  
And the good there is in man

And I remember Swansea  
with nobody about

And I remember Swansea  
with nobody about  
When shops are closed like Sunday  
And just the tide went out

And I remember Mumbles  
with the harbour in its keep  
And little boats at anchor  
That fish the waters deep

And I heard the seabirds calling  
As the gulls all wheeled about  
But all the town is sleeping now  
And just the tide went out

And when these days are over  
And memories remain  
When children painted rainbows  
And the sun shone through the rain

And thought of all the nurses  
Who stretched all the pain  
And I hope the carers never see  
a time like this again

## By Max Boyce

And I prayed last week for Boris  
Who knocked on heaven's door  
And I thought of voting Tory  
which I've never done before

And though the sun is shining now  
I've no immediate plans  
So I'll write a book on "Staying In"  
and "Ways to Wash your Hands"

And now more days of lockdown  
Three weeks of staying in  
And I'm running out of vodka  
So I've started on the gin

And my neighbours are complaining  
I've heard them scream and shout  
At the sounds the bins are making  
When I take the empties out

And when all this is over  
And our fragile world survives  
I hope that God is caring now

And our fragile world survives  
I hope that God is caring now  
For the ones who gave their lives

And I pray we'll find an answer  
For my faith is cast in doubt  
And God draws back the heavens  
And all the stars come out



And I'll remember mornings with nobody about  
The shops are closed like Sunday, And just the tide went out

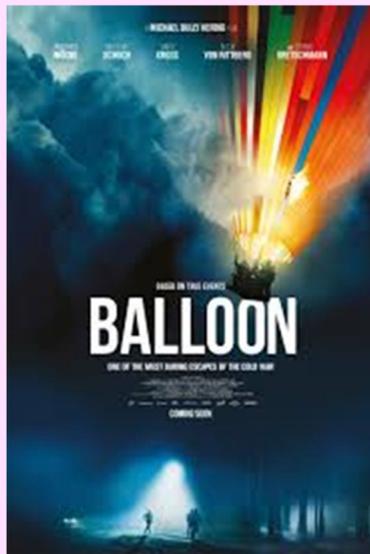
.....

Max Boyce is a well known Welsh singer, musician and comedy performer who has for many years been renowned for his take on Rugby matches from the 1970's to the present day.

He has written profound songs showing his strong allegiance to the national game, the decline in valley life and struggles of the Welsh nation to overcome adversity.

This poem was written and released during the first Covid lockdown, and can be found on the Internet / YouTube with him speaking the poem.

## Balloon



This is film, which is available to watch on BBC 2 and other dimensions following the true story of two families in 1979, trying to escape from East Germany to the west at a time when the Berlin Wall split many and caused great anxiety.

It was to be another ten years before the wall was brought crashing down, and life under huge strains and restrictions to daily life.

That is my reason to mention this film, to bring some semblance of thought during Covid!

You see, there have been many problems over the years which different generations have survived, each one bringing terrific hardship to individuals and families across the world.

To the modern generations total freedom in the UK to “do what you want, when you want, has seemed to be a right of passage, but consider living under total scrutiny, hardship and divided families for 10 years!

Then you might realise what you really do have now, by finding the best in what ever situation you are currently surviving.. Take joy from simple things. Look at the world around you, beauty, nature, friendship and the love you can give or receive from others. A virtual hug is here for you, at this unprecedented Christmas period.

others. A virtual hug is here for you, at this unprecedented Christmas period.



Emoji found on Pinterest website/ app

The Editor

## Audio Description

According to the BBC, Audio Description is a live verbal commentary, providing information which describes the key visual information contained on the screen, which a blind or partially sighted viewer may otherwise miss.

To turn AD on or off, press AD on your remote. For more helpful information please see the **BBC Audio Description help guide**.

Ok, so why am I telling you this? It all begins for me when listening to Radio One over lunch, and the co-presenters were discussing a Channel 4 programme Naked Attraction which one of them had been viewing the night before. To some this might be a controversial programme, but bare with me.... Not literally!

This is how the programme is explained online by Channel 4:

***Anna Richardson presents 'Naked Attraction', a dating show that begins where some dates may end: naked. Singletons get up close and personal as they meet for the first time in their birthday suits, stripped of all clothes, make-up and status symbols. This social experiment is inspired by evolutionary science, where it is believed that in the past people selected mates based on physical appearance. Contestants get in touch with their primal instincts as they narrow down their potential match from a group of six nude hopefuls.***

*down their potential match from a group of six nude models.*

If this has already shocked you or made you sit up straight, you might want to add audio description to the mix! Because that's what is available, and that's precisely what the Radio One presenters were discussing.

No, I haven't watched it, but the fun conversations created whilst I listened to the radio certainly brought smiles to my face. Several other presenters, at different times of the day came on board and this has continued for a couple of weeks.

To many this seems frivolous, but deep down two things have happened. Firstly, in these grim times, laughter and fun emulated for many and lightened the mood during lockdown. But on another level, if we remove the light hearted nature of what I've written about, there is a serious side.

Considering how the young seem to crave perfection in their looks and tweak their photos before uploading to whichever app is in vogue at the time, this programme goes against the grain. By baring all, they are admitting to imperfections devoid of a makeover of any sort. That takes courage.

However, for those with sight impairment Audio Description is a vital lifeline. For those with regular sight, try using Audio Description and close your eyes when one of your favourite programmes is on. Its available for lots of them. You might then understand how lucky you are to "see", whilst possibly having a different perspective on those who can't.

**Sylvie Nicholls**

Herefordshire Disability United

## Notice the world around you



I wanted you to be one of the first to hear about the theme and dates for next year's Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) which as you know, we have set the theme for, organised and hosted for the last 21 years!

for, organised and hosted for the last 21 years!

MHAW 2021 will run from Monday 10th May until Sunday 16th May 2021.

The theme for the week will be “Nature and the Environment” which we hope will inspire a public conversation similar to that stimulated by the theme of “Kindness” in May this year.

Choosing this annual theme is never easy, but this year we were able to draw on evidence from the Foundation’s ongoing research into mental health during the coronavirus pandemic, which has shown that access to nature has been one of the main ways people have supported their mental health during lockdowns and the ongoing restrictions they are experiencing on living their lives as normal.

We also know that protecting the environment is a social justice issue that has huge implications for our collective mental health, both now and for future generations.

You could start the conversation today by sharing the following tweet:

‘Spending time in nature can be great for your mental health! This is why @mentalhealth have chosen the theme ‘Nature and the environment’ for #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek 10–16 May 2021’

## Start a conversation

However, while the evidence is clear that access to nature is crucial for our mental health, nature is not equally accessible for everyone. We will be bringing together this evidence and exploring via our polling and conversations with people with lived experience why nature is so vital for our mental health and the barriers that currently exist to everyone being able to enjoy those benefits.

The week is a chance for people to talk about all aspects of mental health, with a focus on providing help and advice. However, it is only successful because of your support, and the conversations you have with your own communities to champion the Foundation and good mental health for all.

We will be releasing more details about the theme and activities next year in the run-up to the week, so do please keep an eye on our website for updates on the week [mentalhealth.org.uk/mhaw](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/mhaw).

Details from an email are from: The Mental Health Foundation and their link is here:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications>

Here are a series of publications to read.

How to...

How to...

How to...

**How to...**

**Look after your  
mental health  
in later life**



**How to...**

**Sleep better**



**How to...**

**Overcome fear  
and anxiety**



**How to...**

**Support mental  
health at work**



**How to...**

**Manage and  
reduce stress**



**How to...**

**Look after your  
mental health**



## Adam Hills and Rugby League

A Channel 4 documentary which was originally aired in December 2019 was repeated during November 2020, and what a programme delivering hope for those who are affected by physical and mental disabilities.

It brought together a wider range of men who adored rugby league, some whom had previously played it and others who had never considered being part of a real team.

For those who don't know Adam Hills, he came to prominence during the filming for the Para- Olympic Games in 2012, and from this "The Last Leg" was launched and been on our screens ever since.

This photo and some text on the next page is taken from the website named here

<https://www.rugby-league.com/article/56113/adam-hills-take-his-legs>





**You can find the documentary on demand on All4. It is free.**

One nugget of information I gathered from the film is about a team member who has “Nystagmus” a sight condition where your eyes wobble all the time.

This obviously affects vision where you cannot concentrate on objects as they are constantly moving.

Watch this inspirational programme, showing how players have overcome life changing accidents and trauma, and also those who persevered from birth conditions to grab a chance of success on the sporting field.

## “Take his Legs”

The story started in February 2018, when Hills was a member of the Warrington Wolves team who played Leeds Rhinos in the first PDRL (Physical Disability Rugby League) game ever played in this country.

That led to an unforgettable trip to Australia and a fairy tale World Club Challenge fixture against the mighty South Sydney Rabbitohs – the team Hills supported as a boy. He even bumped into another of their celebrity supporters, and recent owner – Russell Crowe.

This year, (2018) Hills has been able to feed his Rugby League habit on a regular basis as the RFL have run the first PDRL league – with the Wolves running out inaugural champions after victory over Wakefield Trinity in the Grand Final in September.

This is Adam’s personal journey from celebrity advocate and enthusiast to team-mate and friend to an incredible group of men, achieving something they never thought possible. The documentary also deals with mental health, PTSD, and the true impact of sport and teamwork on the emotional well-being of a team who have now formed a remarkable bond and support network for each other.

**Take His Legs** is a story of passion, determination, and the amazing ability of sport to unite and overcome.

unite and overcome.

Adam Hills said: "Playing Physical Disability Rugby League has been one of the greatest adventures of my life. I'm so glad we brought a camera with us, because it took me to places I never expected. Like Wakefield. More than that though, it has shown me the power that sport has to change lives."

Pete Thomas, Noah Media said: "This story grew into something we could never have imagined - not only on the field, in the amazing journey to the World Club Challenge in Sydney, but also off the field. An extraordinary team came together and demonstrated the power of sport and teamwork in overcoming both physical and mental challenges."

Ralph Rimmer, the Chief Executive of the RFL, said: "I've been lucky enough to see an advance copy of the film – and it's utterly life affirming. The development of Physical Disability Rugby League over the last 18 months has been fantastic, and Adam has been there from the start, from that first fixture between Warrington and Leeds.

As a game and a governing body, we're inspired by him and all involved in this production, as well as all the other people at the RFL, the Super League clubs and the volunteers who are making PDRL such a success.

Here's to the next chapter in this Rugby League story."

## Being Deaf .... Accepting help

From the beginning of lockdown I joined a Leominster Covid 19 group supporting people with medication & shopping pick ups .

One of the ladies I still support has become increasingly isolated during this time, when local support that vulnerable people used, suddenly closed e.g. Age UK, foot care, lifelines. This help during Covid is provided by older people to older people, and see how to access foot care, with no Google etc.

Compounding this is the ladies deafness which it appears she views as a normal part of ageing, not aware of or expecting any support with it.

When for the umpteenth time I clambered over the overgrown garden to reach the living room to knock on the window to alert the lady.



I thought we need to have the conversation about support with hearing.





with hearing.

Especially when she told me she was feeling nothing is worth doing any more.

Part of the plan is getting a hearing check at Specsavers. to see if a hearing aid is needed, and can help.

I contacted Deaf Direct now named **Action Deafness** through Google leaving a message asking what they can help with.

I was contacted by Amanda Pentoks Equipment Services Manager.

Amanda told me in normal times they offer home visits for assessment to see what equipment can be provided for free via their contract with the council. If the person meets the criteria after assessment. If not, for some people items would need to be purchased by the client. Things available are smoke alarms, door bells, TV loops, personal listeners phones etc.

Amanda also sent a catalogue whereby the person can purchase equipment direct.

Another point Amanda raised was, "Can this lady hear the smoke alarms at night? "

A vibrating pad under her pillow can be obtained through a referral to the fire service. (Need to check if there are fire alarms..... Are they working if so?)

Herefordshire Disability United

## Action Deafness

The lady's trust in me is hopefully growing, so slowly I believe her feelings of isolation/ loneliness will lessen, making her more accepting of support that will increase independence which is so important to maintain.

Action Deafness [www.actiondeafness.org.uk](http://www.actiondeafness.org.uk)

Tel 01905 746301/07940594023

amandapenkoks@actiondeafness.org.uk

### Article from Sheila Cole

#### Some items available from Action deafness



Smoke alarms are available for people who are deaf (those with profound hearing loss). These alarms use strobe lights to wake the person. Vibration notification appliances, such as pillow or bed shakers, are required and are currently activated by the sound of a smoke alarm.

This one is called the "Wake and Shake"



This one is called the “Wake and Shake”

The Geemarc AmpliDECT 595

Amplified

Cordless Phone Twin Set is an ergonomic and easy-to-use phone combo, designed for people with hearing or cognitive impairments.

Fitted with hearing aid compatibility and the option of saving up to nine numbers on the base, this amplified phone will provide the user with a quick and easy way of contacting loved ones and emergency services .

**HOW TO ORDER WITH US** To place an order with us, simply contact our representatives.

We welcome your calls via SMS, voice and text relay.

Telephone: 01905 746301 Mobile: 07725 244129

Email: [equipment@actiondeafness.org.uk](mailto:equipment@actiondeafness.org.uk)

A member of our equipment team will be ready to take your order for you.



Herefordshire Disability United

## Citizens Advice Bureau

We are now part of Worcester CAB and WHABAC and are able to give free, confidential and impartial information and advice for the problems you may face.

To find out how we may be able to help, you can contact us in the following ways:

0344 826 9685 Mon, Weds & Friday 10am -3pm

Call cost the same as a normal 01/02 call

Text us and we will call you back:

For help with Debt problems, text DEBT + Your Name to 0786 00 77 311

### **What to expect when you contact us:**

One of our volunteers will carry out an assessment of your problem and if possible provide you with advice on your options.

If your problem cannot be resolved at this stage we will make you a follow up appointment with the most appropriate adviser.

We can also refer you to some of our services in the community if this is appropriate.

We can also refer you to some of our services in the community if this is appropriate.

Alternatively we will direct or refer you to another organisation to help resolve your problem.



## Free services

For any other problem, text **ADVICE** + Your name to 0786 00 77 311

We aim to reply within 4-5 working days

Send us an email: [advice@citizensadviceherefordshire.org.uk](mailto:advice@citizensadviceherefordshire.org.uk)



Advice service for those receiving assistance from the Hospice

Volunteers based in local community venues

**Our services are:**

- Free of charge
- Confidential
- Independent
- Impartial

**We are:**

- Opposed to discrimination
- Staffed by professionally trained people
- Open to comments, compliments & complaints

**We aim to:**

- Provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives
- Help prevent homelessness through advice, advocacy, practical assistance and support to those in need

## Assessments... Sylvie Nicholls

Many of you may remember back in March 2020, yes this year, that HDU had planned a meeting to focus on the issues of assessments for carers and service users. In fact we had a very full list of attendees, and booked Mandy Appleby who has various titles, but certainly oversees all aspects of social work/ workers for Hereford Council.

We were to hold a “live assessment” so that the whole process might be seen in public, and I had volunteered to be the guinea pig with many years of caring for several members of my family in the bag. Postponing the 18th March event, Mandy had promised that as soon as possible this meeting would take place, but then in March we all thought that Covid would soon pass and not expect the roller coaster of life we have lived this year.

However, all is not lost. I had early in December, a virtual meeting with Mandy and another member of the team, and we are now gathering plans to put together TWO sessions, but virtually. Sorry but it's the best we can do at this time.

We plan to have one session which will be available for anyone, but especially carers to view at their time and leisure. I totally understand that Carers can't just abandon their loved ones / charges and sit at a computer because an invitation has been received. We will then arrange feedback and answers to queries raised, so that a better insight into the current situation can be understood.

better insight into the current situation can be understood.

Also, a second live session will be possible for anyone to view, and currently plans are in place to draw together relevant examples of good practice in video form, which we can view together, ask questions of at the time, and openly discuss matters around what we see. Don't expect this until into the first few months of 2021, as social care staff being front line workers are extremely busy and we must be patient. However, I have stipulated that these videos must be relevant to rural locations and the isolation in which many needing care in Herefordshire survive.

During 2020, I have actually completed paperwork as an advocate for a service user who needed a reassessment following a heart attack. This was purely possible as a basic understanding of need, and answers to the questions were written in long hand, leaving the relevant assessment officer to interpret my findings into the official format. This is when I threw up the issues with wording on the form. Here is an example:

**Being appropriately clothed.**

**Answer, partially achieved..... By whom? ..... Self/ Others?**

There are two meanings to this query.

A. Is the person mentally able to choose appropriate clothing and is dressed?

B. Can they put the appropriate clothes on, physically or need help to dress?

There are several other examples where the questions and answers are misleading, as the form has been shortened too much. This brings service users to refuse to sign their care plan and problems arise, as finance is not forthcoming, or meeting their needs until both parties agree.

**I will keep everyone informed as to when we can go live for these sessions.**

Herefordshire Disability United

## Star College opportunities



Beat the isolation of coronavirus by joining an exciting community learning programme for adults with disabilities in Herefordshire.

adults with disabilities in Herefordshire.

Whatever your age or disability join one of our free 'virtual' adult community learning courses. You can:

- Cook up dishes from around the world (Mondays, 4.30pm to 6.30pm)
- Try your hand at creative writing (Tuesdays 5pm to 7pm)
- Practise mindfulness and resilience (Wednesdays, 5pm to 7pm)
- Build you self-confidence (Mondays, 5pm to 7pm)

Funding from Herefordshire Council means the courses, which start in January, are free online! A one-off registration fee of £10 secures your place.

Find out more and sign up by contacting Sasha Narey:  
Tel 01432 808740  
Email [snarey@nationalstar.org](mailto:snarey@nationalstar.org)



**National Star**

Realising the aspirations  
of people with disabilities



\*£10 registration fee with an additional contribution towards course materials of £3.50 per session for some classes.  
National Star is a working name of National Star Foundation, a charity registered in England and Wales number 220239

## Schizophrenia

In Herefordshire, 2gether Gloucester are no longer the commissioned service for mental health services. Instead, we are with Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care, NHS trust. Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships were set up in 2016 and bring together NHS, local authority and other health and care organisations to collaboratively determine the future of their health care system.

We in Herefordshire are also part of the Community Mental Health Transformation Programme. It aims to bring a real step change in how mental health support is provided outside of a hospital ward, with greater alignment between GPs, specialist mental health teams, voluntary and community groups. It is a pilot, which is one of a handful nationally, went live in October 2020, and will include all of Herefordshire and then Malvern, Wyre Forest, the rural areas of Worcestershire.

One of the things that has gone live is “Now We're Talking for Healthy Minds”. Previously known as Let's Talk in Herefordshire. Healthy Minds NHS is your IAPT service (Improving Access to Psychological Therapies). It provides a range of free, confidential support including:

Online Therapy    Groups & Courses  
Or more traditional 1-1 support

The service can also help to access resources available in the local area, which can complement the service provided. To access the service, you must be aged 18 or over in Herefordshire, (over 16 in Worcestershire)



provided. To access the service, you must be aged 18 or over in Herefordshire, (over 16 in Worcestershire) registered with a GP in Herefordshire. You can self-refer by calling 01432 347 606. Or online [www.healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk](http://www.healthyminds.whct.nhs.uk).



It is early days with the pilot having gone live in October but be interesting to see how accessible the other areas will be. Will it be taken on board about a Crisis number for mental health, and what will happen with Dementia services, or Children and Adolescent mental health?

I did take part in some of the Mental Health Transformation information days pre lockdown, where the message I was getting was we will no longer have the revolving door approach to mental health. Our mental health fluctuates, no longer will people have to go through the pre referral system but will be able to pre access services.

There was promising talk of more clinical staff, particularly psychologists. Voluntary services to become partners in the pilot. Covid came and my communication from CMHTP ceased.

There is a particular group of people whom I am interested in getting the mental health care they deserve. People with schizophrenia and similar illnesses. I asked the question, "What is proposed to support people in this category who are no longer actively being supported by mental health services, usually due to the fact psychosis is subdued through anti psychotics?"

The reply was "GPs and the voluntary sector", but how will this work without some kind of structure given to the support?

## The Abandoned Illness

*Imagine suddenly developing an illness in which you are bombarded with voices from forces you cannot see, stripped of your ability to understand what is real, what is not. You discover you cannot trust your senses, your mind plays tricks on you. Your family and friends seem part of a conspiracy to harm you. Unless properly treated these psychotic experiences may destroy your hopes and ambitions, make other people recoil from you and ultimately cut your life short.*

*We probably all know of a family who is affected but the stigma is such that they may be keeping it a secret.*

*From a commission into schizophrenia Professor Robin Murray.*

Recovery for someone with schizophrenia means different outcomes for different people. Some people who receive a diagnosis of schizophrenia recover after one or two episodes. Some show unremitting symptoms, disability. Others show a mixed pattern with varying periods of remission and relapse. It is an individual journey. The medical treatment with anti-psychotics hold psychosis at bay, they do not cure. Without the right level of support many people simply fall through the net, making up a good percentage of homeless people. Progress has been patchy, more people are accessing high quality intervention in psychosis services.

Early intervention in Herefordshire is now offered to a wider age range. Stigma is still an issue but campaigns like Time to Change have helped. People with mental illness are still dying 20 years earlier, a long way to go to gain parity with physical illness.

People with schizophrenia are still being failed by not having access to the full range of recommended physical health checks including cardiac/metabolic tests

People with schizophrenia are still being failed by not having access to the full range of recommended physical health checks including cardio/metabolic tests.

Although national policies to involve and support carers have been developed, family members and friends too often experience being excluded from important conversations. (Triangle of Care)

The workforce continues to struggle with a high turnover and the plans for development do not get far enough to ensure a strong sustainable foundation, upon which to deliver high quality evidence-based care. People continue to face obstacles from the welfare system with many reporting that the application and assessment system has a negative impact on their mental health. Likewise, current funding proposals put mental health supported housing at risk

Around five years ago a process of streamlining services began in Herefordshire partly driven by austerity measures. Clinical beds were reduced, crisis care in the community was promoted to lower use of clinical beds.

People with schizophrenia were removed from community mental health services, with no forward plan of how their individual mental health would be attended to.

People were returned to GP services who often didn't have a lead person or expertise in mental health. Whether people were formally transferred with their mental health history, side effects to certain medications etc, is not clear. So, can I make a plea that people with schizophrenia and similar illnesses are fully considered within the pilot? That they are treated as individuals with individual needs for support not necessarily through community mental health teams. GP services, properly funded ancillary/voluntary services, supported employment. That at the very least an annual Health check with appropriate health checks, psychological support to be provided at all practices not just when there is a crisis.

**Sheila Cole**

## Useful Contacts

### **NHS Herefordshire**

#### **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**

The County Hospital, Hereford  
Mon-Fri 8.30-4.30

Office Tel No: 01432 372986

Mobile Tel No: 07825 681801

Email:

[makingexperiencescount@wvt.nhs.uk](mailto:makingexperiencescount@wvt.nhs.uk)

### **Equality and Human Rights Commission**

Freepost RRLG-GHUX-CTR, Arndale House,

Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3AQ

Tel: 0800 800 0082 Website:

[www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

### **RADAR, now at Disability Rights UK**

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London, EC1V 8AF

Tel: 020 7250 3222 Minicom: 020 7250 4119

### **Union Walk**

Hereford

HR1 2ER

Tel: 01432 355444

### **Wye Valley NHS Trust Community Health**

Vaughan Building

Ruckhall Lane

Belmont

Hereford

HR2 9RP

Tel: 01432 344 344

### **Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire**

Social Services Adult Duty Desk

Office hours 9am - 5pm

**Office Tel No:** 01432 260101

Out of hours: 0330 1239309 adults

01905 768020 children

**NHS Direct** Tel: 111 (free service)  
**Wye Valley NHS Trust**  
The County Hospital

## Action Deafness

Action Deafness, formerly Deaf Direct, have launched a new Equipment Service and Equipment Brochure, to support the new services for those with hearing loss. The Equipment Service aims to support people with hearing loss to live as safely and independently as possible. Action Deafness offers equipment such as flashing and loud doorbells, amplified phones, vibrating fire alarms, baby alerts, listening devices and much more.



To order a copy of the new brochure email [info@actiondeafness.org.uk](mailto:info@actiondeafness.org.uk), call 01905 746301, or text 07725 244129.

For an extra charge Action Deafness offer a home visit to assess what equipment is suitable for where you live. They also offer full training or "try before you buy". Visits taken place following Covid-19 guidelines.

**Network News is produced by Herefordshire Disability United,**  
c/o 39 Lea Villa Residential Park, Lea, nr Ross-on-Wye, Herefordshire, HR9 7GP.  
Tel: 07817 473813 Email: [info@hdu.org.uk](mailto:info@hdu.org.uk)  
Website: [www.herefordshiredisabilityunited.org.uk](http://www.herefordshiredisabilityunited.org.uk)  
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