Our New Peer Support Worker

By Michelle Lloyd

In October Emma Shallis and I went to Leeds to meet up with colleagues from CHANGE and the University of Leeds who we had come to know through our work together on the Learning by Doing project. This was a joint project all about employing someone with a learning difficulty in KeyRing as a Peer Support Worker.

We held 7 workshops and Members across the South West took part. The workshops were about designing the Peer Support Worker job. This worker would support Members into meaningful work. The workshops were tremendous fun and Members grew in confidence as they went on.

The workshops helped create a toolkit that could be used by other organisations to also look to employ learning disabled people.

Our trip to Leeds was to launch this toolkit.

At KeyRing we started to advertise the new role. After an information day and a selection day the difficult task of choosing the new Peer Support Worker began.

Emma from South Gloucestershire got the job and we are now getting her started in her role and finding Members for her to work with.

After the event in Leeds Emma said: “It has been an amazing journey. Everyone had their say and grew in confidence. Everyone was supporting everyone else whether they had learning problems or not.”

We are really looking forward to seeing where Emma’s role can take us and are very excited for the future.

Find out more about Emma on page 5.
News from the Staple Hill Hub

BY THE STAPLE HILL MEMBERS

Sophie, the Community Enabler, organises the Hub which is new for Staple Hill. We’ve never had a community based group before. It started in March in the pub, then met in an ice cream parlour! Now we meet in Pendennis Church. It’s held every Wednesday from 4.30-6.30.

We play games and try to have fun. We’ve also talked about serious things like avoiding scams.

We do cooking in the kitchen. We’ve made things like a chicken pasta salad, a rice dish and bubble and squeak. We usually use Chris’ recipe book but once Dave brought his own pasta recipe for us to make. Everyone gets involved in chopping things and we take turns buying the ingredients.

We have a planning meeting to plan what we will cook and work out what ingredients we need, then people go out and buy them. Mark had never cooked before. Mike Wright (our Deputy Chief Executive) joined us for one session.

We celebrate birthdays together. Staple Hill is a friendly and social area.

I went to Spain. I was terrified of getting on the plane but I got some support from Fiona my CLV.

I was terrified of the plane crashing so it was one of the biggest things I’ve done. By the time I came back I felt better about it. I was helped by being part of this network. I had very little self-esteem when I joined but it has built my confidence. I didn’t realise I had as little as I did until I tried to step outside my comfort zone. I used to need someone to get on the bus with me but now I try to make journeys on my own.

ANDREW WILSON is a travel buddy, which is a paid job. He really enjoys it and is currently waiting for someone who needs a buddy. “I help people getting on and off”. He does this with the Brandon Trust. He likes travelling on buses himself and is out and about a lot.

CHRIS THORNE and his wife Jackie go to Staple Hill running group. “We’ve been doing it for a few years. We go on a Thursday evening and a Saturday morning.”

MARK BAKER recently went on his first flight in 20 years! Read more about his holiday below.

Mark’s Holiday

I went on a plane, which is unusual for me – I haven’t been on one since 1989.

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Top tips for using KeyRing’s telephone support service (SMaRT)

Phone: 0333 000 0321  Text: 0750 662 8693

1. Save the numbers in your phone.
2. Make a practice call if you are unsure (your support worker can help with this).
3. If something happens during the day try calling your support worker or volunteer first.
4. If you miss your welfare/medication call please call SMaRT back to let them know you are ok and have taken your medication.
5. Think about whether you need to speak to someone right now, or if it can wait until your support worker is available.
6. When you call SMaRT speak as clearly as you can.
7. If you do not like using the phone think about what you want to say before you call. You could write it down first.
8. You can also text SMaRT instead of phoning.
9. Remember that SMaRT are not local. They can’t come out to visit you.

In the daytime I can call: 

Write the daytime number in the box
Visiting Buurtcirkel

BY MICHELLE LLOYD

On the 9th October South West Support Manager Susan Norton and Regional Manager Michelle Lloyd flew to Schipol airport in Amsterdam. We had the pleasure of being invited to the Buurtcirkel annual conference in Amsterdam running a workshop on all the things fantastic and fun about being a KeyRing Member.

We had a bumpy flight due to bad weather conditions but once we arrived soon found ourselves on the fastest bus in the West. We arrived at our hotel in record time and settled in.

We woke early next morning, keen to finalise work on our presentation. We found a lovely coffee shop opposite the hotel in a fantastic community venue hosting a library and health centre amongst others, we felt right at home.

We made our way to the venue and met with all the fantastic individuals, coaches and volunteers who have made the Buurtcirkels the success they are today. There was a lovely atmosphere and everyone was so friendly. We felt like celebrities and were made to feel very welcome.

We were introduced to our translator for the afternoon and although the opening speech was in Dutch, we were able to keep up with what was happening and all the lovely stories from the Buurtcirkel participants themselves.

We soon realised the differences between our networks and the Buurtcirkels across the Netherlands and were keen to learn more. We had plenty of people wanting to come and say hello and learnt our afternoon workshop was fully subscribed.

We had a full workshop bursting at the seams with individuals wanting to hear more about our networks and all the other things we do across England and Wales. We ran out of time due to all the questions and promised to forward the slides. We got great feedback and warmly thanked our host Freek for his invitation.

We were able to enjoy a few hours in Amsterdam City, travelling by tram into the centre which was full of culture and hustle and bustle. We found the most fantastic homemade chocolate shop and filled our boots.

We then went by train from Grand Central station and before we knew it were arriving in Schipol airport preparing to take our flight home.
An interview with Emma Shallis

On page 1 we wrote about the new Peer Support Worker role in the South West. Here the new worker Emma answers some questions about her new job.

What are you looking forward to in your new role?
“Meeting new people, passing on skills learnt, giving people more confidence”.

What did you enjoy about the workshops?
“The workshops were very exciting and interesting as people have different views and skills and I took away things such as learning new skills”.

What do you feel you will get from the role?
“Helping more people, work experience and helping people to get a job”.

What did you learn from the training you received when you joined KeyRing?
“I learnt about how to support people in getting jobs and have learnt about what people are interested in”.

Welcome Rhiannon!

My name is Rhiannon, I am the new CLV for Redcliffe. I grew up in Bath and now live in Totterdown.

I am currently studying Psychology with Criminology at UWE after being a support worker with people with learning disabilities for the past 3 years.

My passion for support work came from growing up with my uncle who has Cornelia De Lange Syndrome, who I have a close relationship with.

I enjoy cooking, reading and going to the cinema. I look forward to meeting everybody in due course!

Farewell Fiona

Staple Hill Members wanted to thank their CLV Fiona who is leaving after 12 years.

Chris said: “She helped me and Jacky with our wedding in July 2008.”

Mark said: “She worked tirelessly in KeyRing for 12 years. Her legacy is to make sure that the Members were kept informed about current affairs, things like politics. We had many visits from people like the Police, the Fire Brigade, Merlin. She’s been involved in communicating with and writing to people like our local councillors.”
News from the Frome Hub

It’s been 2 years now since we started doing our Hubs here in Frome and we think that they are going very well.

Here in Frome we have 2 places where we hold our Hubs and they are at The Cheese and Grain which is our weekly Hub and at Frome Medical Practice which is our Talking Café and that one is held on the last Wednesday of the month.

In the last year we have had even more people come to our Hubs to speak, take part and to see what we are doing. We have had Housing Association Managers, workers from other charities, social services, the Police and even staff from some of the networks nearby have visited us.

One of the best things that people get support with at our Hubs is being connected with people or groups. We are going to continue our work down here and we have quite a few amazing ideas for the future.

A local charity called Nova Sport and Coaching came to our Feeling Safe Hub and spoke to our Members about whether we would be interested in trying the Olympic sport of Boccia. We set up a date and Nova Sport and Coaching came and taught us this great Paralympic sport that everyone could easily learn and play.

We had an amazing time playing it, so much so that we invited them to come and play it again with us. After the second time, which was even better, they talked to us about joining the league that they run in Bath and we are currently deciding when to join it.

In July we held our yearly KeyRing Summer Picnic and as usual we all brought some food for us all to share with each other. This year we tried to make it a cross network social so we invited all of our closest networks and a few Members from one of the Bristol networks came along to enjoy the day with us. It was really great to meet them for the first time and to have a good laugh in the park.

Our friend Jo at Somerset Activity and Sports Partnership lent us lots of sports equipment for us to play games with which was also great fun and good exercise at the same time. We all had a great day out and next year we’ll invite everyone in KeyRing to come along and hopefully we will have Members from up and down the country coming.
Community Organising

On the 1st October a group of Members took part in a day of training with Community Organisers. The training was an introduction to Community Organising, which is about bringing people together to take action on issues that are important to them.

KeyRing has been working with Community Organisers to train some of our staff. Now we want to get Members involved in the training as well, and then become trainers themselves.

Three of the Members who took part were from the South West.

MARK BAKER SAID:

"I enjoyed everything about the day. I think it was fantastic to meet people from the other networks. It was harder than I thought it would be but I enjoyed it as it was like real work.

I feel that I am contributing. I learnt a lot of stuff there. I feel it will help with my listening skills. It was a positive thing as I got to know my weaknesses and strengths and work on these.

Everyone seemed to enjoy participating. This is important for me at this present moment in time to help my confidence."

CHRIS THORNE SAID:

"I enjoyed the course talking about the different types of power. I enjoyed meeting new people. There were nice people to talk to on the course. We spoke about keeping places like day centres open.

We learnt about speaking about rights and being brave to stand up for your rights. We got to choose pictures in the group and to speak about our pictures.

The best thing about the day was being able to talk to the other people on the course and sharing different opinions on things."

BELLA EDWARDS SAID:

"I had really enjoyed the day it was fun. There were activities that we done where we split into groups or did one to one. For example selecting a picture and talking to another person about it. It was interesting to hear other people’s stories. I told everyone how I got my cat which means a lot to me.

I got to meet few new people that I had not met before and everyone was very friendly."
Health Champions in Staple Hill

On the 10th January Lisa Prewett (Community Enabler), Mark Baker, and Dave and Heather Pearce from the Staple Hill network met up for a Health Champions meeting on nutrition.

We all enjoyed the session where everyone contributed to a brainstorm about what we think about when we hear the word nutrition. Lots of very good ideas were discussed such as how nutrition and what food we put in our bodies affects our health and mental wellbeing.

Liz from South Gloucestershire Public Health lead the talk and showed us an example of food packaging. She told us how the new food labelling laws have given the public access to more accurate information about what nutritional values are in our food.

For example if we go into a shop to buy a sandwich now, the food labelling “traffic light system” shows us exactly how much fat, sugar and energy is in our food so that we can now make more informed decisions about what food we eat.

Liz showed us examples of how much sugar is in a can of Coke by showing us cubes of sugar and showed us packets of foods to compare sugar content.

Dave, Mark and Heather were really shocked to discover that a bag of yoghurt covered raisins actually contained more sugar than a small bag of Haribo. Liz said that just because a product is marketed as “healthy” doesn’t necessarily mean it is and this is why the food labelling “traffic light” system is so important.

At the meeting Dave, Mark and Heather got to meet other Health Champions and really enjoyed the informative session. They felt they came away with some really useful information about healthy eating.

During the session we also did a short talk about healthy eating on a budget. Dave, Mark and Heather are really excited about upcoming Health Champions events.
Our Services in Warwickshire

Community Links Service

Warwickshire’s Community Links service provides individuals with a low level mental health condition with 18 hours of 1:1 support with a KeyRing Community Enabler. The aim of the service is to build Members’ confidence and help them access services in their community which will benefit their wellbeing. With the hard work of our Community Enablers, Melanie Fletcher, Michelle Lewis and Lamin Conteh we have managed to double our referral rate in the last year and are on track to help even more people for the 4th year of the service.

Financial Freedom Project

In January 2019 we were fortunate enough to secure a grant from NatWest. This has allowed us to provide a more holistic approach to our support for people living in Nuneaton and Bedworth, being able to offer them support through both the Community Links Service and the Financial Freedom Project. The feedback we’ve received from both Financial Freedom Project Members and organisations we have linked in with are very positive and as with the Community Links Service we have been able to reach individuals who otherwise may have not received support.

Community Links: KeyRing and Mental Health Matters Hub

Due to the number of Members living in Rugby we are supporting through the Community Links service we decided to start a fortnightly hub session at Rugby Methodist Church. The church kindly offered us use of the whole premises and will help us advertise via social media. The hub is run by Michelle Lewis, a KeyRing Community Enabler and Maria Beale, a Support Officer at Mental Health Matters. Our hub provides a safe, friendly environment for people that would like to explore the support available in their area. Our ex-Members will be able to share their knowledge and experiences of support in Rugby with one another. The hub started on 30th April 2019 and has grown in popularity with every session.
Dave the poet

Dave Pearse is a Member in Staple Hill, and a poet. He recently had his poetry displayed at Staple Hill library to celebrate National Poetry Day.

His showcased poems were a mixture of factual and fun poems about the local area. Dave is extremely happy to have had his poetry displayed and is hoping to forward his poetry in the future to publishers.

Tracy’s Writing

Tracy is a new Member in Staple Hill who likes to write stories.

Here is part of her version of Alice in Wonderland.

German Market Trip

Sandwell Members will be taking a trip to the German Christmas Market in Birmingham on Thursday 5th December.

Goodbye Matthew

Matthew Herbert has been the Member Complaints Officer since 2015.

This role recently came to an end and we would like to thank him for all his hard work and wish him all the best for the future.
Andrea’s Rice Krispie treats! Makes around 10 cakes

What you need:

- Rice Krispies
- Chocolate (I used Milky Bars, Mint Aero & Dairy Milk)
- Cake cases
- A mixing bowl
- A spoon
- A microwavable jug

What you do:

1. Break your chocolate down into small pieces and put into your jug.
2. Place the jug into the microwave for 30 seconds.
3. Bring out and stir, place back in for another 30 seconds – continue to do this until the chocolate has melted fully. *Remember the jug might be hot*
4. In a mixing bowl, mix the Rice Krispies and chocolate together well.
5. Spoon into each cake case.
6. Repeat with other chocolate flavours if wanted.
7. Leave in the fridge to set for 30 minutes.
8. Share and enjoy!
News from Sandwell

Happy 40th Birthday Anthony

A Huge Happy Birthday to Anthony who celebrated his 40th Birthday in August.

Anthony has been with KeyRing for a while, going from Member to Community Living Volunteer in the Sandwell area.

Anthony supports with peer to peer support, helping Members through a range of different situations, which Anthony has also had experience with. He also runs community hubs and social groups! Happy Birthday Anthony!

Litter picking with the Eco Bus

Sandwell Members were joined by the Eco Bus in Oxford Road.

Members had a tour of the bus and supported with a litter pick around the Oxford Road area in West Bromwich. All Members have signed up to monthly litter picks with litter watch and are just waiting for their uniforms.

Goodbye Maurice

Sandwell Member Maurice Tilley has now completed his 2-year programme with KeyRing. Maurice has achieved so much during his time with KeyRing. He is just waiting on his brand new mobility scooter so he can get out and about to our community hub sessions. Well Done Maurice!
The Sandwell Hub

Network Meetings

We hold monthly network meetings across Sandwell. These were not well attended when staff were doing them alone, so we agreed to join forces and have a network meeting for the whole of our Sandwell services, being held each month in a different area of Sandwell.

We have made the focus of these meetings a celebration, which encourages Members to attend. Each month staff members nominate Members who have done amazing work over the month and we wanted to recognise this.

Alan

Alan received the award for all his hard work he has done with his appearance. He is now looking after himself, buying new clothes, sorting out his personal life and is now extremely happy.

Chris

Chris received this for all the hard work he did arranging the Oxford Road Picnic back in the Summer, arranging the date, picking a time, creating invites and encouraging people to attend.

Kim

Kim received this award for all her hard work. She is now travelling on public transport to see her dentist, to see her mum in the care home and into the town centre.

Members enjoy their network meetings...

Below are some photos of Sandwell Members enjoying their monthly network meeting held at the Hungry Horse, West Bromwich.
Cooking, bowling and travelling in Sandwell

Well Done Alan!

Well Done to Sandwell Member Alan Hewitt.

Alan has worked really hard over the past few months with his support worker Maria. He has managed to increase his independence and is now cooking meals in his new slow cooker.

Alan is also travelling to The Recovery College on his own. Well Done Alan - keep up the great work!

Well Done Leonard!

A huge well done to Leonard for getting a new mobility scooter. Now he is able to come out and socialise more in the community.

Sandwell Bowling Trip

Sandwell Member Chris arranged his first outing with other Members from the Sandwell area. Chris created a poster and supported all the Members there. Well Done to Andrea for winning. Huge well done to Chris for arranging and planning this trip.
News from the Trustees

The last Trustees meeting was on 26th October. Alongside the regular reports on how KeyRing is doing the Trustees looked in detail at what is happening with developing new work, communications and innovations. They were:

✱ Excited about the research work on Criminal Justice and people with learning disabilities. This is coming to an end and we are applying for a bigger grant from the Big Lottery for a 3 year project so fingers crossed!

✱ Supportive about the employment project to develop a recruitment agency to support people with disabilities into work. We have funding from Catch 22 to fund the set up this year.

✱ Pleased with the outcomes achieved by Charlie as the new Marketing and Communications Manager over the past 6 months. They really liked the way that Members’ voices are growing.

✱ Pleased to see progress with the work on developing innovations such as the bid for funding for KeyShare with Shared Lives and the application to Impact Accelerator for consultancy.

✱ Re-assured by the Business Development report which set out all the work in the regional teams for more people to have KeyRing support as well as the new opportunities for Members.

The Trustees looked at our finances and were pleased to see that KeyRing is on track with our finance and Business Plan objectives and that the overall performance was good.

Finally, the Trustees also looked at how they work together as a board by completing individual profiles. This showed that the Board has a broad range of skills and ways of working which work well together. It was interesting to see the personality profiles for everyone.

Going to the Learning Disability England Conference!

Learning Disability England is having their next conference on Thursday 13th February in Manchester.

They will be talking about how people and organisations are making sure that people with learning disabilities are included.

KeyRing would like to send 4 Members to the conference. We will pay for the ticket and for your transport. If you are interested please speak to your support worker or Sarah Hatch at sarah.hatch@keyring.org by 18th December.
Your Photos

Bella Edwards is a Member Trustee of KeyRing. When she was in London for a Trustee meeting she popped to Downing Street to give Brexit the thumbs down!

On 12th May some of the Barton Hill network had a lovely day out in Glastonbury. Here they are having their lunch.

This is Jack, he is Pamela Smith’s Jack Russell and likes coming to the network meetings in Redcliffe, Bristol. Pamela has had Jack for 7 years, he is a rescue dog and they are very close. When they go out in the local community he gets lots of attention from people.

Jacqui and Tim both do volunteering. Jacqui volunteers at her local animal shelter and Tim volunteers for the bloodbank.

The next edition and get in touch...

The next edition will be from London and the South East. If you can’t come to the meeting you can still tell us your stories. You can send them to Sarah at the national office, pass them to your volunteer or worker, or ask someone who is coming to the meeting to bring them along.

That’s all for this time! If you have anything you would like to see in the paper or on our social media pages please send it to: Sarah Hatch at sarah.hatch@keyring.org.

For an audio version of the paper phone 020 3119 0960.