



KeyRing News

SUMMER 2026

"My name is Faith, and I want to tell you about how having an Individual Service Fund has changed my life."

ME AND MY ISF

By Faith Walton

I live in my own bungalow, and I have lived independently for many years.

Before that, my life was very different. I lived in an institution until I was 18. After that, I lived in hostels and shared housing. That was a hard time for me.

So now, my home is very important to me. With my ISF, I have made it feel like a real home, and I work hard to keep it organised.



Out and about with Sheffield Members

I love having freedom, being able to go out when I choose and I love trying new things. I've recently got a job as a trainer, speaking to students at the University of Sheffield.

Before I had an ISF, my support was worked out in hours. My support was on set days and I often had to wait in for workers to come.

Sheffield Council were doing a pilot around ISFs and KeyRing asked me if I wanted to use an ISF.

Me and money don't mix, so I didn't want a Direct Payment as I'd have spent it all but not on the right things. So an ISF is good as KeyRing manage the money with me.

I used a PATH plan to work out my goals and how I wanted to achieve them. I got to talk about my hopes and what matters to me. We worked out a plan together in a way I could understand.

We also review my plan regularly and I can change what I want to do and how I spend my ISF.

My ISF has helped me to get my home sorted. I wanted a home that I felt proud of.

Doing the planning for my ISF helped me realise that I needed more specialist support. I used my ISF to pay for the Clutter Doctor. They helped me to get organised.

I also started free art therapy sessions.

I have a gym membership. I need help at the gym to show me how to use the equipment and to help me get into a routine. I could have had support workers come along with me but I'm using my ISF to pay for time with an instructor.

I used my ISF to pay for a Carrybase. It's like a planner and it reminds me to do things.



Faith at home



Faith at the gym

I used my ISF to make my garden safe as it was very overgrown.

My gardens have all been cleared now and they look amazing. I walk around the corner to my bungalow and I think, that's my garden. I can sit out in the sunshine now and I'm going to plant some flowers.

I can use my ISF for things that aren't planned. Like for extra support sessions to do activities. Or if my health gets worse again and I need help to go to appointments.

I get to choose what's important to me as long as it links to my care and support assessment.

Before my ISF, I never knew how much my support cost. With my ISF I know how much money I have to spend and I decide how to spend it.

I go swimming on my own now which I wouldn't have done before my ISF. My worker showed me how to use the app to book the swimming sessions and I do all this myself now.

I'm making decisions now that I didn't make before. I am more confident. I think this is because I am in control. Having an ISF helps me to live a better life.



Faith's garden before



Faith's new fence

GUY'S SMOOTHIE RECIPE

In the last few months Frome Member Guy has started to make smoothies as he wanted to get more protein into his daily diet. He is now on his 4th different flavour and after support to get going with them he is making them by himself regularly in the mornings before he starts his day.

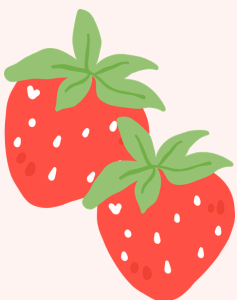
"I would like to share my latest creation which I call Berry and Mint. I give it 9 out of 10 for flavour."



Guy with his Berry and Mint smoothie

Here are the ingredients. You just put them all in a blender:

- 100ml milk
- 5 Frozen strawberries
- 10 Frozen raspberries
- Fresh mint (as much as you like)
- Cashew nuts (1 handful)
- Hemp seeds (1 handful)
- Flax seeds (1 teaspoon)
- Chia seeds (1 teaspoon)
- Yoghurt (optional)



GETTING HEALTHY

By Hayleigh Turner

I used to drink every night to help me to feel numb and go off to sleep.

I had my last drink in December. This was after I was thinking about a walk I had been on in the early hours of the morning whilst being under the influence of alcohol. The next day I realised that I had not made a safe choice and this gave me a reality shock and made me realise that I was putting myself at risk.

I then decided I was going on a health kick. I now run four times a week for 15 minutes. I am also eating healthily and haven't had any takeaways for a few months.

I am cooking my own food, I will have eggs, spinach, onion, mushroom, tomatoes and avocado on sour dough toast. I also enjoy cous cous and have increased my veg and fruit intake and reduced my Pepsi Max intake to two a day.

My long goal is to eventually pack in vaping!!!



PANTOMIME SOUP

By Michelle

I was in a production called Pantomime Soup. This was written and performed by Macintyre Melodies, and I played the evil cat. It was a mixture of different pantomimes like Jack and the Beanstalk and Cinderella. My friend Naomi was the evil stepmother. I attended the rehearsals every week unless I was ill or had something else to do. It was hard work, and very tiring. I didn't have to learn any lines but I had to learn the songs and my friend Naomi would only go up if I was there.

It was on for just one day: 17th June. We did a morning performance and then an afternoon performance which was mainly for the school children. Tracey, the local Support Manager, came to the morning show. She said I was brilliant and she really enjoyed it and found it very funny. Everyone joined in clapping and singing and then at the end we had to go on stage and take our bows. I really enjoyed doing the performance and seeing Tracey there watching us was good.

I think I would be part of the next production and hopefully one day I will become famous.



PICTURES FROM PRESCOT

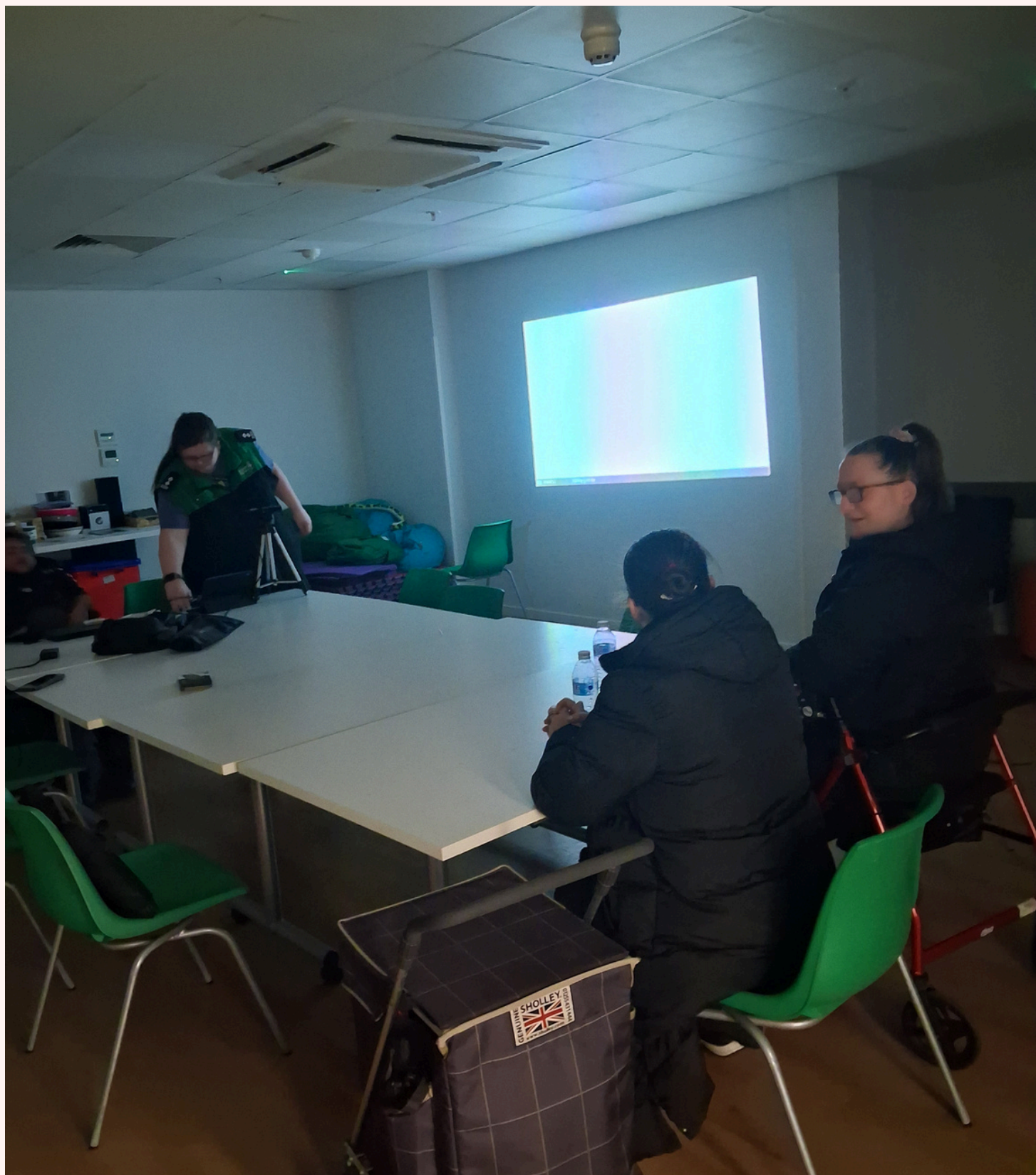
By Abdoulaye Traore



Our annual Christmas meal was held at the The Grapes Hotel Restaurant. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together, enjoy a festive meal, and celebrate the season.

The event was well attended, with lots of laughter, conversation, and friendship shared throughout the afternoon. It was a lovely way to end the year and celebrate our hub community.





The hub has also been enjoying regular Cinema Days, where everyone can relax, watch films on the projector, and spend time together.

These sessions have been a great way to bring people together, encourage friendships, and create a fun, welcoming atmosphere.

MY TRAINING JOURNEY

By Sam B

I was 12 years old when I was diagnosed with Autism and having a learning disability. This meant that I struggled in social settings and found school very hard and was excluded.

I also had to deal with the fact that I was born in the wrong body, but that is a different story. When I was 27 years old I was diagnosed with ADHD.



I had mentioned to my support worker Tracey that I wanted to do some training, maybe even get a job. Tracey mentioned the KeyRing Launchpad and asked if I would be interested in doing the Oliver McGowan training and becoming an expert with lived experience. I said I would give it a go.

Tracey emailed Dawn who was the manager of Launchpad and she asked me to complete the form and said Jodie, one of the workers, would be in contact with me. Tracey supported me to fill in the form.

Jodie phoned me the day after and explained what would be involved and what dates the training would be. She asked me if I felt comfortable travelling as it would be to Crewe. I said I would be fine even though I had to be up early to get there. I asked Tracey if she would phone me at 8am on the first day training as the train was at 8:42am.

So, I started the training on 20th May and then 21st May. I travelled to Crewe and met up with Dawn who you couldn't miss because she has multicoloured hair. We stayed over in Crewe and went out for a curry in the evening which I enjoyed.

The last day of training was 3rd June and it was back in Crewe, so what did this mean for me now I had done all my training? Dawn had explained to us that this meant we could now deliver the training with her and we would be doing it in Warrington first for the Warrington and Knowsley staff. I was okay with this as I know all the staff in Warrington. The first training I did I was nervous and didn't really speak a lot.

Since doing my training, I am on the Futures Platform and have been approached by Colemans Training who are based in London and CBAT, a training company who are based in Southport.

I have been part of delivering six lots of the Oliver McGowan training in Northwich, Alderley Edge, and St Helens. Later this year I will be in Liverpool, Stoke-on Trent, Manchester, and Leeds.

I feel okay about travelling and am more confident in getting up and talking to people I don't know about Oliver McGowan. I am really enjoying delivering the training, and will continue to do this for as long as I can.



YOUR PICTURES

A Member wanted to share this print that they made at their local KeyRing hub.

VISITING THE DOG CAFE

By Martin Rivers

Three Members from the Newcastle KeyRing hub went to the Dog and Scone cafe in Newcastle. Michael, John and myself Martin Rivers went on Saturday 25th April.

We had a fantastic time playing with all the dogs (I threatened to sneak one out in my coat but I don't think my cat Albert would have been pleased.)

I'm looking to run another visit soon and open it up to Gateshead Members too.

Next time we will probably go on a weekday as it was a bit busy on a Saturday afternoon.



THE FIRST SHEFFIELD POOL COMPETITION!

By Shaun Booker



Alex



Steven

The pool competition was the brainchild of Member Jordan Dickinson and myself. There would have been 8 Members attending but sadly due to illness, an appointment and severe weather on the day only 2 Members took part but they enjoyed it a lot.

Steven is hard of hearing but up for anything that's fun. Alex struggles with anxiety so for him to get to the venue was massive.

They played 5 warm up games then first to win 3. The first game was won easily by Alex, the second game was a really close game but Alex won on the black 8 ball.

The final game was another close one with Alex once again winning on the black 8 ball.

They both won a medal and Alex won the first KeyRing trophy... hopefully there will be more players at next year's competition.

GEORGE'S DRIVING TEST



George in Sheffield recently passed his driving test. After 52 lessons he passed the practical exam first time!

"I never knew I really was going to pass. I kept level headed, sticking to what was important in my driving test. I stuck to what major faults to avoid. Checking both mirrors, meeting traffic, not parking on the curb etc. When I was given the results that I passed, my face was dumbstruck but in a good way, like a good sigh of relief."

NEWS FROM THE TRUSTEES

We said goodbye to 3 trustees over the past few months. Shaun Webster, Harish Jani and Rich Hyams all retired from being trustees. They have all given their time, knowledge and expertise to KeyRing and we have been very thankful for all their help.



This meant we had 3 vacancies to fill including 1 for a trustee with lived experience of support. At the trustee meeting on 8th June the 3 new trustees met the board and joined the meeting. It was a chance to try it out before they get voted on as trustees at the board meeting in September. Luckily for us they were all keen and so we are welcoming Rojah Gunntrip, Gill Rowe and Rob Hilyer as new KeyRing Trustees.

Many of you will know Rojah from his volunteering at the hubs in London, but we will do a full introduction of all the new trustees in the next newspaper edition.

Trustees also talked about how they can connect with Members across the country. They really enjoy visiting the hubs and meeting people and will carry on doing that. If you want a visit let us know by emailing Karyn at karyn.kirkpatrick@keyring.org.

Trustees also talked about how we can carry on with the Member Voice activity; we had a lot of Member Voice people apply to be a trustee and people were keen to contribute. Trustees with lived experience, Natalie and Rojah are both really keen to support this, so we are getting organised and you will hear more about what will be happening at hubs near you.



OUR BUDGET

There has been a lot in the news about how social care is not working and does not have enough money. Like all social care organisations, we are affected by the cuts to council funding, and we are working hard to balance our budget. We spent more money last year than we brought in. This was expected and planned for though, and we are still financially strong. We don't want to spend all our savings however, so we have made some changes and the trustees agreed with our future plans.



OUR PLANS

We know that KeyRing works for Members, that our support is excellent and that Members contribute a great deal to their local communities! Because of all of this we know are good value and a strong choice for councils. So, looking ahead to this year the trustees approved the KeyRing Business Plan 2026/27 which aims to improve our budget and focus on:

- Reaching more people who would like KeyRing support.
- Working with managers so that every team has enough time to take up opportunities in their area for Members.
- Setting up our new system that holds every Member's information safely and securely and starting work on phase 2 so Members can see their own information.
- Building a national network for Members' Voice activity and linking in with the trustees.



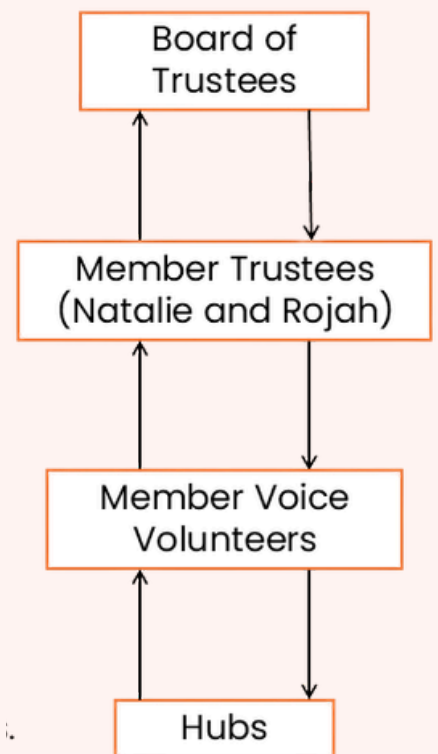
MEMBER VOICE UPDATE

We have been looking at how to get Member Voice active again. After meeting with our Member trustees, Natalie and Rojah, we have come up with a plan.

The Member Voice group will be made up of Members from different parts of the country. So far this is people from the old Member Voice group who want to carry on, and some of the Members who applied for the trustee role.

They will meet with the Member trustees, who will pass on information and questions from the board of trustees.

Member Voice reps will take this to their local hubs. They will speak to Members there and get their feedback. There will be a set topic 4 times a year, but Members can also give feedback on other things.



Then they will share this with the Member trustees, who will take it to the next board meeting.

What happens next?

- We want to find Member Voice reps for the areas that don't already have someone.
- We will send out more information to Member Voice reps and to hub leads.
- If you are interested you can speak to your hub lead.

THE NEW OUT OF HOURS SERVICE

There is a new number and email for contacting KeyRing during weekends and bank holidays.

How does the new service work?

If you call the phone number you can leave a message on the answerphone. It will be sent to the Out of Hours manager. They will also get your email.

What should I say in the message?

Tell us:

- your name
- your network or council area
- a phone number and/or email address
- why you are ringing us.



What will happen next?

The Out of Hours manager will look at your message.

If it is not urgent they will pass it to your local team. Someone will contact you on the next working day.

If the message is urgent the Out of Hours manager will call you.

If you don't have the new phone number and email address please ask your support worker.

That's all for this time!

You can listen to the audio version of the paper on the KeyRing website News page.
You can also send us your stories or pictures for the next edition.



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