



A note from Daniel

Hi All

This latest lockdown has felt like the hardest yet and I know that everyone is now feeling pretty fed up and desperate for life to return to some sort of normality. I also know from the feedback that you have given me, just how much Paul's Place has meant to you over the last year. Despite not being able to support people in person, you have appreciated the ways in which we have continued to be here for you.

With Spring around the corner and the hope that the vaccination programme brings, we have been making plans to reopen. I am really pleased to be able to announce that we are aiming to reopen on **Tuesday 6th April 2021**.* I will be communicating the exact plans around reopening through a series of Zoom meetings that are advertised in this newsletter, so if you have any questions (and I am sure that there will be many) please do try and attend one of these.

2021 will be a year of some changes. At the same time, you have my assurance that I will also ensure that we do everything that we can to keep the essence of what makes Paul's Place 'tick' intact! Happier times are ahead and I for one am excited about that.

In the meantime, stay safe, keep well and remain positive!



Daniel

*Please note: we're still working through the details and working out how we will be able to allocate days to members etc.

Reopening Plans Zooms

Daniel and the team will be running a number of 'Reopening Plans' Zooms in March, where they will talk through the plans around reopening and answer any questions that you have.

The meetings will be as follows:

Thursday 18th March 2021 – 11am

Friday 19th March 2021 – 11am

Friday 19th March 2021 – 1pm

Monday 22nd March 2021 – 4pm

Tuesday 23rd March 2021 – 11am

Wednesday 24th March 2021 – 4pm

Usual Paul's Place Zoom log in details will apply.



Paul's Place news

Praise for the new Paul's Place at Home activities

Paul's Place at Home offers a wide range of Zoom activities each month, as well as providing a 1-1 telephone befriending service designed to support the health and wellbeing of disabled adults and their carers.

**"Enjoying having a timetable so I can choose the Zooms I want to attend."
- Sam**

"Helps me feel that I'm not cut off from all my friends." - Lisa

"Paul's Place has helped. I look forward to my phone calls and beginning to use Zoom too, they're doing a great job like always. Thank you guys." - Gary



Introducing our two new support workers

Leanne Stowell

Leanne currently runs The Bromley Tea Rooms, but prior to this worked as a Support Worker for the Brandon Trust for several years. In this role, Leanne supported disabled adults in running a community café as part of Grimsby Farm.



Mikhaela Gartland

Mikhaela currently works for Bingham Day Services supporting disabled adults with both learning and physical disabilities. The support includes both 1:1 support and group work. She is used to providing personal care and working in a person-centred way. Her previous roles also include supporting individuals in their own home as well as in the community.

We look forward to welcoming them both to our Team!

Introducing our Volunteer Coordinator Jools Easty!

As the Volunteer Coordinator, she ensures volunteers get the most out of their time with the charity, gaining relevant skills as well as providing a rewarding experience for all those involved. Jools is inspired by the work at Paul's Place and brings previous charity experience with her to the role. Outside of work Jools lived on a narrowboat for over 25 years, her favourite things to do include exploring the canal and river network by boat or by walking.



Are you looking for volunteer opportunities?

We have some exciting projects coming up!

Get in touch with the lovely Jools by emailing jeasty@paulsplace.org.uk to find out more about Volunteering opportunities in 2021. Or give us a call in the office!

If you know someone else who is looking for volunteer roles, we would love to hear from them too!

Thank you



Fundraising events in 2021

Just like in 2020, we won't let this pandemic get in the way of enhancing the lives of disabled adults and their Carers.

You showed us that your appetite to make a difference extends to online events and challenges.

Watch this space as we share further details next month.



There is still time to sign up for the Bath Half 2021



Image: from Bath Half

The race organisers have made contingency plans, meaning whatever situation we find ourselves in, you can still take part!

If you are our next Bath Half runner, secure one of our limited spaces with Clair today by emailing Clair at fundraising@paulsplace.org.uk or give the office a call on **01454 777236**

Spotlight on disabled creators

Disability Bloggers we love

SimplyEmma is a travel blogger living in Scotland. Her topics extend to wider disability topics too. Recently, she has begun film reviews! [Click here for her Website.](#)

DystrophyDad is a brilliant blogger sharing his everyday life, living with Muscular Dystrophy. His blog posts are intelligent and funny, plus he covers film reviews too! [Click here to access his website.](#)

From Travel to being disabled and self-employed. **Shona Louise Blog** gives more great insight! [Click here to access her website.](#)

These are just some of the many brilliant individuals changing the narrative for disabled people. There is a big online community of disabled people sharing their experiences in the hope to break stereotypes and stigmas found in our society.

The Last Leg on Channel 4 recently covered this topic too

For those with catch up TV, on Friday 12th February, Alex Brooker from The Last Leg shared an important truth about what it is like to date with a disability.

Alex Brooker shared that, "when I was online dating, I never disclosed my disability. I remember being self-conscious about my hands. I remember being too scared to tell people about my leg and hiding it. The dating game is a struggle for anyone. We're all trying to find someone who is going to love us for who we are. If you do see a disabled person, you shouldn't dismiss them, because I'll tell you what, when we say to someone you complete me, we mean it."



[Watch the full video here](#)

Useful information

Finding reputable resources

According to the regulatory body Ofcom: "Half of the adults in the UK now use social media to keep up with the latest news, according to [Ofcom's annual news consumption report](#). It found that while TV is still the most popular way for people to access news, its use has fallen since last year, from 79% to 75% of adults. At the same time, use of social media for news has risen from 44% to 49%."

However, it's important to recognise the rise of fake news, especially on Social Media.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the false information shared about the virus and the vaccines have increased. To combat this, it's important we know how to find credible sources.

Remember, anyone with a technical know-how can create a website, it doesn't mean they are qualified to share that information. Additionally, many of us are feeling scared, angry and frustrated. Before pressing that share button, ask yourself; How do I know if this is a

credible source? Is there any more research I can do to ensure this is the truth? If it's a trusted friend, who is their source?

Remember the game where you would whisper something and pass it on, by the time it got to the final person the story had completely changed. Social media has the power to do this with millions involved in just mere minutes.

[To help you spot fake news online - here is a useful guide.](#)

Safe resources to learn more about coronavirus and vaccines

Government websites like [South Gloucestershire Council](#) and [NHS Website](#)

Covid-19 Vaccination Information Event for Disabled People hosted by local authorities

To support disabled people in South Gloucestershire to make an informed decision about Covid-19 vaccinations, South Gloucestershire Council, Healthwatch South Gloucestershire and South Gloucestershire Disability Equality Network are organising an event with local representatives from the NHS and Public Health to provide guidance and answer questions you have about the vaccine.

Please join us to hear from the experts and make an informed decision.

Date: Thursday 4th March 2021

Time: 3.30pm to 5.00pm

Visit <http://tiny.cc/vaccinessouthglos> to register

Help and support in lockdown

Paul's Place is here for all those who are part of our charity. We have increased the number of activities and created sessions dedicated to supporting the health and wellbeing of our service users.

Additionally, it's important for us to share even more resources should you need extra help and support;

Mental Health support and resources

There are organisations out there who are here to help. Organisations like **CALM**. Their helpline on **0800 58 58 58** is for people who are feeling low and looking for someone to confide in.

Changes Bristol are a brilliant mental health charity who have created online support groups. For more information, their number is **0117 941 1123**.

For **telephone support**, Bristol Mind offer a great service too. You can call their emotional support helpline **MindLine**, which is running an extended service during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis and is now open 7 nights a week, 7pm-11pm on **0808 808 0330**.

Samaritans is also a major organisation that offers telephone support to anyone struggling at this time. You can call and chat with a volunteer at **116 123**

For those who want to text, the organisation **Shout** is here to help. The UK's first 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. **Text Shout to 85258**.

We have almost made it to Spring - in the meantime, stay safe and well

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