



**Forum  
Central**

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A collective voice  
for the health and care  
third sector

**Learning Disability Member Meet Up**

*May 7<sup>th</sup> 2020*

## **Learning Disability Member Meet-Up**

**7<sup>th</sup> May 2020 | 14:00pm-15.30pm | Via Zoom**

### **Introduction**

The Learning Disability Meet-Up brings together Forum Central members with an interest in Learning Disabilities and offers the opportunity to network as well as providing members with news and updates from the 3rd Sector, city-wide strategic updates and keeping member informed about the work of Forum Central.

The meeting was due to be held at The Vinery but due to the Covid-19 pandemic was held virtually via Zoom. The intention was to provide an opportunity during the government restrictions and social distancing guidance for learning disability member organisations to connect and share updates on the impact of Covid-19 on their services and members.

In addition, the session was used to share the creative adjustments that member organisations have made, what solutions have worked in overcoming the issues faced and how to build on this learning. This session was left informal so the frequency and content of future meetings could be decided upon.

### **Participants**

- Jez Coram – Forum Central
- Andy Rawnsley - Aspire
- Lucy Graham – Forum Central
- Caroline Aylward - TCV
- Luke Aylward- Advonet / Leeds Autism AIM
- Wendy Cork - Advonet
- Jenna Peel – Outside the Box
- Cathy Wintersgill - Connect in the North
- Emma Midgley – Leeds City Council - Commissioning
- Paul Sellers - Dimensions
- Josh Cook - Scope
- Mandy Haigh - Leep1 / Advonet
- John - Chapeltown CAB
- Sue Munday - HFT
- Barbara Stewart - Leeds Bereavement Forum
- Anna Marie Garbutt - Health for All
- Carol Ann Reed - Health for All
- Pete Hughes – Leeds Autism Services
- Madeleine Fahy - Connect in the North
- Linda Langstaff – Specialist Autism Services
- Rachel Kingdom – Yorkshire Dance
- Bob McDougall - People in Action
- Carol Benson - Aspire
- Laura Joyce – People Matters
- Bronia Angove - Purple Patch Arts

- James Hill - Pyramid of Arts
- Jenny Sellers – SNAPS and Leeds Weekend Carers Association
- Claire Nixson – Advonet / Asking You
- Kate Holdsworth - Hft

## Notes from the meeting and updates

1. **Jez** welcomed and thanked members for joining the call and ran through the aims of the meeting
2. **Andy Rawnsley** shared sad news about the death of Norman Campbell, Norman was a big part of the learning disability community for 40 years. Andy then updated on the name change after the merger of PSI – Volition and Tenfold. The name of the organisation will be Volition and work of the learning disability members will still be recognised under Forum Central. Andy thanked the team at Forum Central for their hard work during this difficult period.
3. **Jez** passed on a message from Alison Conyers about Hospital Passports and the Covid-19 cover sheet, the Health Inequalities Grant Fund and Leeds City Council Digital Inclusion team:

- **Hospital Passports:** please use the hospital passport and covid 19 cover sheet which can be found on their website:  
People should send in their hospital passports for the team to keep electronically. Please get in touch with Alison and the team if they need to?

### Learning Disability and Autism Team - LTHT

Telephone: 0113 2066836

Email: [leedsth-tr.ldautism@nhs.net](mailto:leedsth-tr.ldautism@nhs.net)

Web pages:

<https://www.leedsth.nhs.uk/a-z-of-services/learning-disability/the-hospital-passport/>

Also available on Through the Maze website:

- **Health Inequalities Grant Fund** - West Yorkshire and Harrogate Health and Care Partnership (WY&H HCP) launched their Health Inequalities Grant Fund - £450,000 of funds has been made available to voluntary and community organisations to help tackle the impact on people's health affected by COVID-19. Voluntary and community organisations will be invited to apply for grant funding for up to £50,000. Six funds will be available for up to £25,000, with another six grants between £25,000 and £50,000. deadline to apply is 5pm on Monday 8 June 2020. Decisions will be made by a virtual panel and applicants will be notified before 30 June 2020.  
<https://www.wyhpартnership.co.uk/news-and-blog/news/partnership-launches-its-health-inequalities-grant-fund>

Webinar for additional information about the grant funding on 13 May 2020 at 11am. To join please email: [tessa.hawkes@nhs.net](mailto:tessa.hawkes@nhs.net)

- **Leeds City Council's Digital Inclusion Team** have an offer of support for organisations struggling to access tablet devices and other equipment. 4G enabled iPad lending scheme running as well as several Amazon Echos. The team is looking at how it can adapt the delivery of the Tablet Lending Scheme to get equipment to people that need it over the coming weeks. Please contact Rachel Benn, Digital Inclusion Coordinator, 100% Digital Leeds, at [Rachel.Benn@leeds.gov.uk](mailto:Rachel.Benn@leeds.gov.uk).

#### 4. **Lucy** updated on Mindwell and Leeds Mindful Employer Network:

- **Mindwell** - have launched a [Coronavirus Mental Health Information Hub](#) which will act as a 'portal' bringing together information about mental health and Covid-19 for people in Leeds.
- **Leeds Mindful Employer Network**, commissioned by Leeds Public Health and led by Leeds Mind, brings local employers together to champion positive mental health at work. The Network is supporting employers with specific challenges around the Covid-19 crisis. Get in touch with the Network by emailing [mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk](mailto:mindfulemployer@leedsmind.org.uk) or join the network for free [here](#).

Laura McCullagh is the Mindful Employer Coordinator, contactable here:  
[laura.mccullagh@leedsmind.org.uk](mailto:laura.mccullagh@leedsmind.org.uk)  
0113 305 5800

#### 5. **Member updates**

- **Caroline Aylward TCV – HollyBush project** – programmes closed, supporting members and family carers by weekly telephone calls. Put together an activity pack which went out before Easter, putting together another one. Using Facebook posts and partner projects doing lots of mini videos on activities such as seedling planting. Facing barriers around digital inclusion for older members. Looking for solutions and ideas on how to deliver remotely. Most don't use Zoom or live with elderly parents.
- **Jenna Peel – Outside the Box** – All services are currently closed, launched Outside the Box Connections, keep in touch virtual connections, weekly, fortnightly telephone calls. Sending smaller activity packs, letters, setting up one to one and group virtual calls on Zoom. Developing virtual workshops, demonstrations, tutorials, and offering some, one to one home-based support.
- **Luke Aylward – Leeds Autism Aim** – Not been able to run their hubs or post diagnostic services, but been able to do one to one, advocacy and peer support. Giving information and signposting by email and phone, text chat and WhatsApp. Developed the Covid-19 Autism Toolkit, including Covid-19 Autism alert card. Parts

of the toolkit have been used nationally by UCL and West Yorkshire Police. Put out a survey around how Autistic People are experiencing the lockdown and how the police can make the guidelines clearer.

Link to autism COVID-19 survey for WYP:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/autismcovid19police/>

- **Wendy Cork – Advonet** – Starting the Keeping Connecting Project on Monday 11<sup>th</sup> 2020, running for two months, West Yorkshire and Harrogate, led by Inclusion North, initial focus in the North East on learning disability but Advonet's focus will be on Autism because other organisations locally can support on learning disability. The project is about connecting those people that are particularly isolated and not connected with services. Trying to reach people falling between the gaps. Blanket restrictions through Advonet and IMCA service. Really willing to help anyone that needs guidance around rights currently. IMHA service having issues with making sure people are connected to technology. Complaints proceeding as usual. Less referrals in community advocacy. Sending out poster update around rights.
- **Cathy Wintersgill – Connect in the North** – Through the Maze made changes to the website, new section around Covid-19, split into two sections, one for activities provided by organisations and the other section for easy read information on guidance. Weekly timetable at the top of the page of activities. Training stopped but online activities for staff and board with learning disabilities. Contactable by phone. People who are not online ringing up. June newsletter going out for people who are not online – collaboration on content by organisations. If there is online activity by organisations for Learning Disability Week, please send to Connect in the North to go in the newsletter.
- **Mandy Haigh – Leep 1** – Set up an online Facebook group for members but opened it up to non-members, now at 250 people participating, schedule of activities during the day until 3 then members going online to run their own activities, virtual club nights on an evening. Changed the website so people can get to information, have been getting tech out to the most isolated, first by ringing them daily and then starting to see them participate in online activities. Seeing people who they haven't been seen in a long time online has been amazing. Hurdles have been support staff with no digital skills and elderly carers whom may have never used tech before. Some people still needing daily calls. Working on plans for Learning Disability Week with People in Action, possible talent show.

Process for getting people online who haven't been before has involved lots of phone calls, getting the right tech out to people, 4G enable if no WIFI or tablets from lending schemes. Talking support workers through the tech on the phone and then the info being passed on to the person. Support workers have changed their shift to help people get online.

- **Laura Joyce – People Matters** – Services closed in the building, outreach continues, working to keep in contact with members through video calls, phone. They have been setting members up on WhatsApp groups or zoom, various other platforms.

Sent a couple of tablets out to people and waiting for smart phones to send out to people. Started online workshops through Facebook page. Found Facebook page has worked. Promoting other organisations activities, barriers have been older members with no internet, and then continuing support. Learning more about how to do this.

- **Linda Langstaff – Specialist Autism Services** – Closed day services, all staff at home, intensive training for staff, wellbeing calls to members who attend services. Set up Zoom workshops every day in the afternoon, starting morning workshops. Had to teach members how to use Zoom and other platforms. Hard for staff team. Zoom workshops quite successful, 20 participants. Started a Youtube channel with short videos. Accessed tech through Digital Leeds, sent tech out to members, run practice sessions on the phone. Worked with parents to learn how to use Zoom. Send out information and resources, community information. Daily timetables for people. Mental Health struggles. Using MS Teams, very intense. Training ongoing. Regular contact calls. Ongoing monitoring through welfare and online activities, helping to identify who is struggling.
- **Sue Munday – Hft** – Using MS teams, support provider with 30 properties, challenging times, usual activities have stopped, so houses and staff teams have had to get creative and do things they usually wouldn't have done. Bake Offs, talents shows, choir, quizzes and gardening. Exercise in the home or via daily walks. Keeping in touch with families, crafts for people. Some people reluctant to go out. A couple of people afraid to go out. Staff going around but not wanting to go out. Health and wellbeing calls. No-one is left isolated. Staff have adapted to using technology. One person moved into a property for a week. Very lucky in the service so far. 'Keeping in touch group' will go for walk or cycle as long as well and no symptoms. Mental Health side will be greater thing to take care of.
- **James Hill – Pyramid of Arts** – Running groups via Zoom, 50% of members active, didn't have 4G enabled tablets so lent tablets out to people, some providers have secure WIFI and won't let people connect to the network unless using tech by recommended suppliers. Issues, critical eye on reasons why people are enjoying the online group activities, and aware that they are maybe not able to produce artwork of the same standard as before. Staff feeling like teachers rather than partners, trying to think of imaginative ways to involve people. Thinking about how to recruit people in future, what are the services they will be offering in 6 months' time. How do they evaluate the quality of the work provided over Zoom when it comes to contracts and grant funding being renewed? Collective discussion. What are the standards for evaluating work and reporting? Online gallery and activity.
- **Barbara Stewart – Leeds Bereavement Forum** – Offer bereavement signposting and training. Had a drop in bereavement referrals but starting to pick up now. Had a lot of organisations contacting for bereavement training. Looking at developing online facilitated training. Delivering first package in a week. Have a learning disability and bereavement package, which has been delivered as a full day face to

face package. Looking at making it bitesize. Have links to Covid-19 resources. Books beyond words have easy read resource for Covid-19 bereavement.

Leeds Bereavement Forum Covid 19 resources:

<http://lbforum.org.uk/news-and-events/covid-19-useful-bereavement-links-and-resources/>

- **Bob McDougall – People in Action** - Groups and services still going but online, posting out to members but running daily public zoom meetings. 11am 2pm 4pm. 11am is scheduled activities, 2pm is stay active in partnership with Yorkshire Sport, and 4pm Member Chat. Videos produced on how to use Zoom. Sending out tech as well. You can access Zoom meetings via a landline. Works in a similar way to using a webcam, you can be muted and join in when other people can join in depending on how the session is facilitated.

YouTube Zoom tutorials:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhBd30l1prg&t=29s>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=llLvkCbHU5Y&t=134s>

- **Claire Nixon – Asking You / Advonet** – Peoples Parliament and Face to face events on hold, speaking to people and redirecting to other organisations and activities, and finding out what people think. Encourage providers to open up networks so people with tech can access online activities. Helping with tech. People asking about when it will be over, planning for learning disability week. Digital Inclusion team have amazon echos and VR headsets. Question on whether anyone has had success with these.
- **Carol Ann – Health For All – The Bridge** – Day service in Holbeck closed, keeping in touch by phone. Linked with Anna-Marie Bee Together Zoom group, keep on trying and trying with people to get online. This is new for a lot of the people and carers / support staff and great when it works, and a new face pops up. Question they have is, when are things going back to normal? Would like collective discussion on planning and strategy for when restrictions are lifted.

Meanwood fest cancelled.

- **Anna-Marie – Health For All – Bee Together** – Set up the Bee Friends social group online. Issues of not having the tech and support workers needing the info to help people get online. Getting there and having successes. Supporting people that are more isolated. One person won't pass on phone number. Sending info in the post and weekly letters. Inkwell sending out art packs. Question on how to engage the most isolated? Thanks to 100% for getting the tech.
- **John – Chapel Town CAB** – No face to face services but people are calling in on the phone. Doing general advice work and welfare calls to clients. Some referred on to Leeds Welfare Support team, need support on getting food parcels, transport or shopping.

- **Pete Hughes – Leeds Autism Services** - Have been able to continue some face to face support but only where it is essential. Most of the work has been keeping in touch, welfare calls and activities. A fast and steep learning curve. Working on a new website, better facility for sending out information. Lots of inquiries asking for advice and being able to sign posting to other organisations. Staff are coping and able to reassure peoples' anxieties.
- **Kate Holdsworth – Hft** – Have several vehicles and staff are drivers so switched to supporting vulnerable people or families of vulnerable people. Doing shopping for people, taking people to essential appointments, talking to people. Looking at some online groups now after essential work may be levelling out.
- **Andy Rawnsley – Aspire** – Aspire have several different types of services, respite services different to how they were, there has been a drop off in demand. There is still a steady stream of people wanting respite services, though. People finding themselves in crisis situations so changed one of their respite units into a crisis unit, two crisis units now working with 10 beds. People using those beds when their care has broken down for several different reasons. Closed day services, doing activities to support people and family carers and signposting to other organisations. Biggest issue is to maintain supported living services, over 300 people in supported living across the city. Across all services have a workforce of 800 and 179 off with illness or self-isolating, primary task is making sure supported living services are staffed to keep people safe. Conflicting guidance on PPE early on, clear guidance now. 3 people in supported living have passed away due to Covid-19. Hard for families, staff and people they lived with. Focus is keeping infection controlled and working practices in a way that minimise risk to people. Been in lockdown for 8-9 weeks at supported living level. Limiting social contact for people who may struggle with social distancing guidance. Exercise in best interest decisions for the people in supported living. Keen to do something for Learning Disability Week. The challenge is what does our future delivery service model look like in the medium to long term. It is going to be a struggle to go back to how things were for some extremely vulnerable people until there is a vaccine. From conversations, funders keen for a thriving third sector as we ease out of restrictions over the next weeks and months. Challenge will be how to be clear about how we are making a difference for peoples' lives.
- **Bronia Angrove – Purple Patch Arts** – Running services differently, daily activities on their website, themed each week, four or five activities. For participants / members a separate page on the website with videos and radio show. Access via facebook, twitter etc, to activities for everyone. Trying to connect with participants and look at innovative ways of how to do things in the future. Please link up and share activities.
- **Josh Cook – Scope** – Services are over the phone, sleep services, family services and employment. Still running call centre and have a lot of information online, family services have put out info called Mindful Monsters – just for children. Employment service referrals dropped. Spent time expanding services across Yorkshire. Get in touch if anyone needs one to one support with employment.



- **Jenny Sellers – SNAPS and Leeds Weekend Carers Association** – works to support young people with additional needs. Services are suspended for the time being, support over the phone and online, craft packs being sent out to children. Expect to be shut until September. Set up online directory of activities and then sharing. Providing activities on social media. Supporting family members with food shopping and medication. Members interested in physical activities they can do with their kids rather than connecting online. Steep learning curve and still feeling it out. Finding ways to support families.

<http://www.lwca.co.uk/forparentsandcarers/>

- **Carol Benson – Aspire** – Discussion around planning for learning disability week. What to plan instead of the usual events? Would be good to set up a meeting to discuss. Awards postponed until later in the year. Keen to deliver usual activities in a different way.

**Action:** Madeleine offered to contact Louise Mills to arrange a meeting for next week and to add Carol-Ann and Anna-Marie to the steering group meetings.

6. **Jez** offered to set up more frequent meetings for members to connect and discuss issues brought up in the meeting, including planning and strategy for when the restrictions are eased.
  - **James Hill** came in to say Pyramid of Arts have started to think about new policy and procedures, what safe working would look like if their groups were to come back, standards for infection control, and were thinking it would be great if that was a common response from all learning disability members, to avoid duplicating that work, to have a discussion forum to run through the things to included in that, and then be able to give that collectively to funders and decision makers. It may be that it is not possible to do it in the short term but to come to that decision collectively. And to have a set of standards around infection control. Standards exist but it would be good to do collectively.

**Action:** Jez to set up a fortnightly meeting to discuss issues brought up starting with what James described.

7. **James** added as a member of the board thanks to Lucy and Jez for organising. Great to hear amazing work being done across the board, it lifts the spirits.
8. **Lucy** thanked everyone and closed the meeting.