

KeyRing News

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Our Eye Health

20th-26th September was National Eye Health Week and on September 20th we ran our second Top to Toe session in South Gloucestershire.



The Top to Toe group

Top to Toe is a new group where people can get together to talk about different health issues.

The September session was about eye health, to coincide with National Eye Health Week. It was a great success. We had guest speakers, Wayne Chapman and Lance Campbell from SeeAbility. Wayne and Lance spoke to the group about our eyes and how to look after them. Our Members also shared some of their personal

stories about their eyes and experience with opticians and hospitals. Everyone said they had learnt something new.

Dave said *"It went very well, was informative. I felt they supported our individual issues, such as when I spoke about my lenses."*

Mark said that *"The speaker was very friendly and good at what he does. He seems good at connecting with things to do with eyes."*

Ann Keen is a KeyRing Member in Lambeth in South London. She has to take care of her eyes because she is diabetic.



Ann Keen

"I have a mole in my eye and they have to keep an eye on it to make sure it hasn't got bigger. They could not get a good look at it when I went to have my diabetic eye screening, so I went to see an eye specialist at St Thomas' Hospital."

"They used a machine to take photos of the back of my eye. I get my eyes tested at Specsavers in Brixton. It's important to look after my eyes because I am diabetic."



KeyRing's Covid Champions

● BY LEYTON WANDS, OLDHAM

In Oldham we have been supporting Members with their issues and concerns around Covid and the vaccine.



Leyton Wands, Oldham

THE ENGAGEMENT TEAM

We have also been helping those in the community that do not have any support services in place. We have achieved this by joining the Oldham Council Engagement Team each week and going door to door. This has been really helpful for many people.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We have been using social media to promote having the vaccine and offering support to the wider community. Having conversations around the myths that have been

going around on and off social media has been really helpful to those we have come across while offering support.

THE MYTHS

The myths have been a struggle for many people especially those with learning disabilities and autism as they have expressed concerns about what to believe and who to trust when information is being given. This is still a challenge we face and we have been coming up with awareness sessions to tackle the false information.

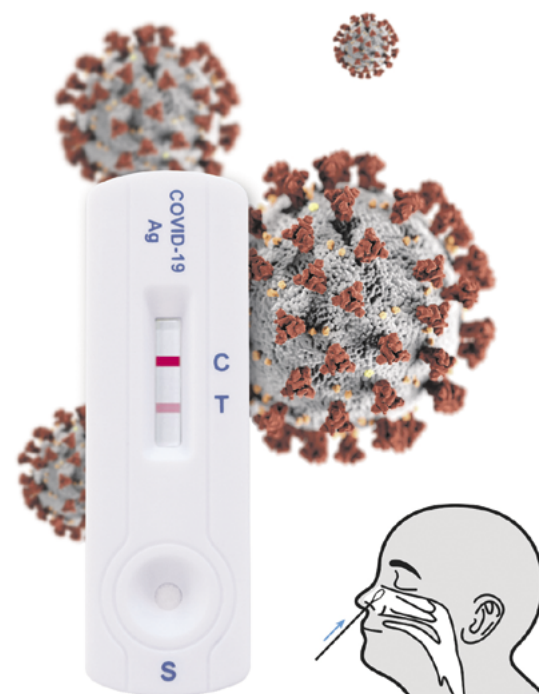


ONLINE HUB

We have an online hub every week where we run a monthly session around different issues to help those that may struggle to understand what to believe.

LATERAL FLOW TESTS

KeyRing have been offering support with lateral flow tests, doing video sessions of how to do them for people to follow



along as well as face to face support for those that find this difficult. Many people have started to test regularly thanks to this and do not find it frightening or unbearable as they once did.

GP SURGERIES

We have been reaching out to GP surgeries to offer support with their patients that have learning disabilities and autism. We are hopeful that we can set up a partnership soon to reach even more vulnerable people.

We have joined in with the engagement team with promoting the vaccine bus and have arranged for more people to come down and get their vaccine.

This is a brief description of what KeyRing have been doing. With much more to be done still.

News from Grimsby

Doing a 10k run

Congratulations to Dan Baker who completed a 10k run in July!



Dan (centre) on the 10k

Dan also celebrated his 30th birthday by organising a night out with Members Gavin, Paul and Jack.

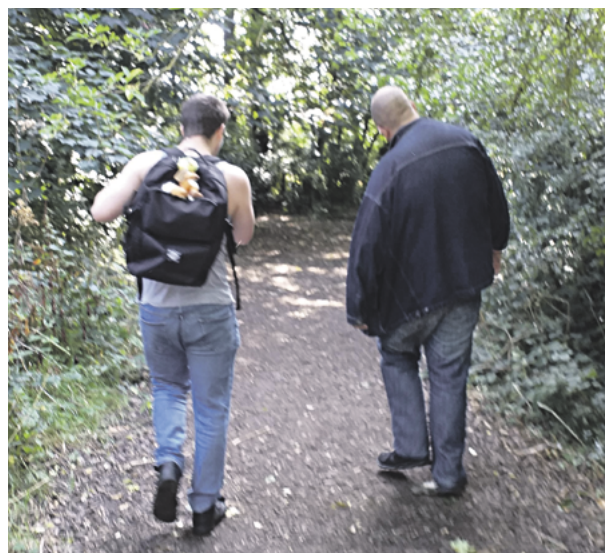


Walking group

Every Wednesday the Grimsby walking group go for a walk in a different location. On 11th August they went to Cleethorpes. They had a walk along the seafront and stopped for a coffee.



Paul and Jack also like to go walking together. They go to the Rock Foundation together twice a week and like to go walking in the woods.



KeyRing best buds visiting the woods

Paul's Volunteering

● BY SADIE MONTEITH

Paul and I went to St. James Church (Grimsby Minster) in town for Paul to meet Sally, who runs a café at the church.

He was asked a few interview style questions and he did a brilliant job, and was offered some voluntary work on Saturdays working in the church café.



He was so excited and said he couldn't wait to tell everyone, and his stepdad, Les, about his new job.

Huge well done to Paul, the community will think the world of him.

Croydon Crafts group

● **BY ALEKSANDRA MILETIC,**
COMMUNITY ENABLER



Patricia, Cheryl, Aleksandra and Shirley

The Croydon Hub and Spoke service has a craft group. We have Patricia who is starting a new project making a smart phone stand, Cheryl with her cushion case cover and Shirley with her crocheted blanket in progress.

We are trying to minimize buying new materials and instead use remnants of old projects and everything and anything that is laying around the house, unloved and forgotten perhaps at the bottom of some old basket.

This is because we are worried that people are creating too much waste which is bad for our planet and wildlife.

We have a lot of people who are interested and are hoping that more of them will be able to join us in future.

Bexley Travel Training

● **BY JOANNE WETHERIDGE,**
COMMUNITY ENABLER



Bexley Members in central London

We did travel training to London. It was good to do for staff as well as Members. We went to Covent Garden. We had a sit down and had a drink. Members walked and looked in the market.

All the Members said how much they liked doing this and if they could go with other Members would feel able to do this themselves.

David wanted to have lunch in the Pasta House so off he went and said he could make his way back home himself. David is very good at traveling and goes to Paris by himself.

The rest of the Members went to Leicester Square where we all sat on a bench and Members got lunch from where they wanted to.

John's Gaming Convention

● **BY JOHN BREADON**



John in his costume

I planned a journey for 4 months to go to Bristol Anime and Gaming Con in August.

I found a suit online in China and bought it. It took between 2 and 3 weeks to arrive. I also found the shoes and it took the same amount of time to come.

I booked a week off work and also a room at a local Premier Inn where I was to stay for the whole week.

The Con was good, everything was a highlight. I liked walking around and buying things.

I bought lots of things there. The best thing I bought was the Xenomorph who is the Alien from the Alien films.

News from Sheffield

FAITH went to see Cliff Richard! She is a huge fan and had a fantastic time.



RICHARD celebrated his birthday with a meal at The Spitfire in Dore.



PAUL has been cooking Shepherds Pie and enjoying getting out and about again.



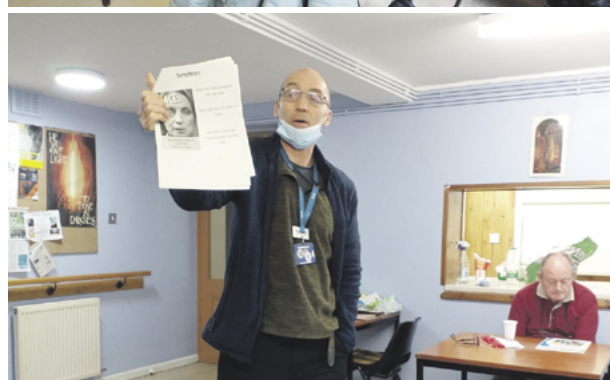
STEVEN has been doing some wood burning!



The Sheffield Hub



The Sheffield Hub has been for their first lunch together back at Low Edges Community Centre since lockdown!



The Hub has also had a session on health and wellbeing.



Earlier this year they went to the seaside festival.

Members at Work

Talking to KeyRing Members who have paid jobs



We've been talking to some KeyRing Members about how they got their job, what they do and why they like it.

Cecilia

Cecilia works as a kitchen assistant in a hospital. She started by volunteering.



Cecilia didn't know what she wanted to do or if she could get a job. She did know that she didn't want to "watch tv and be idle" all day. She started by volunteering through Clubhouse in Brixton, and the hospital then offered her a paid job.

She has now been working at the hospital for 9 years. Her work involves preparing food for the staff, and cleaning the kitchen.

Having a job means that Cecilia can pay her bills and support her family who live in Sierra Leone.

David

David Gill works for the NHS as a Learning Disability and Autism adviser.



What did you want to be when you were growing up?

When I was growing up, I wasn't sure about what I wanted to be. As a massive Sheffield United fan, I would have probably said I wanted to play for them. I have always been into my comics and I did fancy becoming a cartoonist. I have kind of lived that dream as my artwork is used in certain NHS publications, presentations, and documents.

What do you do at work?

I work in the national children and young people's team for children and young people with learning disabilities and autism. We help people who are in difficult situations, like being in hospital for a long time, to have the right support to live a good life in the community with their families. As an autistic adult I bring my own lived experience of growing up with autism to the work by working in co-production with them on different projects.

What made you start looking for work?

I got fed up of living off benefits and living in fear of having them taken away from me through different medical assessments.

Members at Work

Talking to KeyRing Members who have paid jobs



■ Did you have any jobs before this one?

I volunteered at my local self-advocacy organisation, I was part of KeyRing's national forum and I chaired the Yorkshire area forum.

I found out a job with the NHS was available and applied the same day.

■ In the past was there something that stopped you from having a job?

When you are autistic, people often focus on what you can't do rather than what you can do. This was often the message to me when growing up through school.

■ What is good about having a job?

I feel a proper sense of worth by having a job. It gives me a reason to get out of bed in the morning and I just feel better earning my own money. It helps that I really enjoy my job as well.

I have been able to get and run a car thanks to having a job. I am also looking into buying my flat and getting on the property ladder.

Elaine

Elaine volunteers for two charities and works as a cleaner.

I have a very busy week. I volunteer at two charities. At Walton Lea Partnership I do crafts, or work in the potting sheds. I make some really nice things, recently I made some Bee Happy



cup coasters. A lot of the crafts items that we make are for sale in the shop which helps raise money. I once even helped repair the bikes which we also sell.

I also work part time in a café bar in the town centre. I am the cleaner there. I really enjoy my job and get great satisfaction from making the restaurant very clean, My previous job was also cleaning, I cleaned at the train station for three years.

I have always wanted to work and not claim the dole. When the role ended, I went to training classes to help me find employment again. Remploy helped me with interview techniques, building my CV and talked me through the application process.

I really love working as I get to meet new people and pay my bills. My ideal job would be working for Sir Cliff Richard, I could clean his cars, or anything else he wanted me to do.

Members at Work

Talking to KeyRing Members who have paid jobs



Shaun

Shuan works for a human rights organisation, in a hospital and does freelance work making information into easy read.



Shaun always knew that he wanted to have a job. He wanted to earn his own money and have his own home. He says that not believing in himself was a big barrier to overcome.

"My first job was in a hotel as a porter. I got it through a work scheme. I did like doing that. It was quite interesting, but in the end I got a bit sick of the hotel."

Shaun took a new job working in a warehouse. He wanted to work in stock control because he enjoyed working with numbers but was told he was too slow. Shaun was also bullied by his colleagues but he couldn't leave because he needed a job to support his family.

"I moved into KeyRing while I was working at the warehouse, and one of the staff members told me about jobs going at CHANGE. I was surprised by how many people with a learning disability were working there. On the interview panel was a person with a learning disability and a person without. They were co-working. I'd never heard of that before." Shaun has now worked at CHANGE for 21 years.

He has worked on lots of projects and travelled the world training young people with learning disabilities. Now he is working on an LGBTQ+ project, *"supporting people with learning disabilities to find information about their sexuality, supporting them to come out, breaking down barriers and attitudes. I'm enjoying doing it because I feel like I can use my experience to help other people."*

Last year Shaun applied for a job at St Mary's Hospital in Leeds. He couldn't find his paper CV and was struggling to rewrite it because of his dyslexia so he asked if he could do his application on video and the hospital agreed!

At the hospital, Shaun is part of the Involvement Team using his experience to make information accessible.

In between these jobs Shaun does freelance work making information into easy read. Having a job has meant that Shaun has been able to travel abroad. He also likes going out with friends and having his own money to spend, and being able to spoil his wife! They have even been able to buy a house together in the Philippines.

"You can make a decision about what you spend your money on. If I wasn't working I couldn't do that."

"My dream job is I want to be a public speaker, I want to make information accessible, I want to talk about my experience and inspire people. But I feel like my dream's come true, I've got it every day because of my job!"

Members at Work

Talking to KeyRing Members who have paid jobs



Paul

Paul works for an organisation called Kick.

At Kick we clean up disability aids for them to be used by those in the community.

I originally worked at Waitrose as work experience doing shelf filling.

Then I got a job at Halfords repairing bicycles.

I went for a job at Clock, I was up against 4 other people I felt really good getting the job.

I get to keep my benefit because I only work 16 hours.

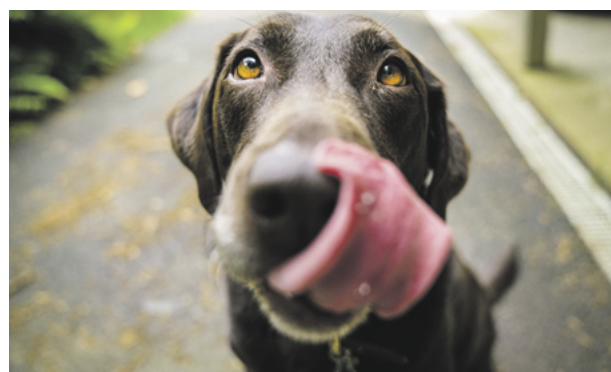


PHOTO BY JAMES BARKER ON UNSPLASH

I was able to buy my first Dog Tyson, I had to have him put down not that long ago. He was very old and not very well, it was sad.

But I have two new dogs now, and they are taking up as lot of my time.

Natalie

Natalie works at Sainsbury's in food services, on the hot food and pizza counters.



Natalie always wanted to be a chef and work in catering. She started a cooking course for people with learning disabilities at her local college but had to stop when she had a baby. When she wanted to go back they said she wasn't the right age for the course.

A friend told her that Sainsbury's were looking for Christmas temps and put her in touch. After Christmas they told her they would like to keep her on.

Natalie is a people person and likes all the interactions she has through her job.

"I like the independence. You get to talk to different types of people, you get to interact with customers, your colleagues. I like to talk to customers. Sometimes you get a laugh, you make jokes. It's a good way to get out of the house instead of sitting indoors all day, you motivate yourself, your mind."

During the pandemic Natalie's role also involved putting online shopping orders together for people.

"All during the lockdown I was out there helping feed the nation."

In her spare time Natalie likes to buy food and cook and bake. She posts photos of all her favourites on her Facebook and Instagram pages: search for Caribbean Honeyfood to see them.

We Love Page Park!

● **BY RHEA HEFFORD, STAPLE HILL CLV**

Staple Hill Members had a discussion about our local area and the things we've really appreciated it for during lockdown.

It was agreed that Page Park, our local park, has been one of the main sanctuaries for many of our Members over the past two years, as it's somewhere they could all continue to access and enjoy when staying inside got too much!

We then went on a walk around Page Park and collected materials to use in collages. The following week, we came together and created collages about the park, inspired by the park and using the things we found in the park (as well as some pretty coloured paper I had lying around!).



Mark



Jackie



Heather



Dave



Andrew



Chris

Your Photos...



DEREK SCOTT and his Community Enabler Nick spotted this tree when they were out on a walk in Newcastle. Derek loved it and got Nick to take his photo.



MICHEAL has been baking lemon and jam tarts! He enjoys helping his friends at their allotments and sometimes brings different fruits and vegetables back. A few weeks ago he made apple crumble with some allotment apples!



Earlier this year **SHAUN BROOKES'** mum sadly passed away. To remember her Shaun has made this display with photos and special items.



SAMUEL STILL now has a full time job at Evans Turner, a factory in Crayford. Here he is at work!



Pen Pal

Graham Cox is a self-advocate in North Yorkshire. He would like a pen pal to write to. If you are interested contact Sarah at sarah.hatch@keyring.org.

RAY in Warwickshire is a keen gardener and grows his own sunflowers!



Jungle Heaven!

● **BY BRAD LLOYD, ALSO KNOWN AS BIG MAC BRAD**

I'm a DJ and since 2018 I have wanted to see General Levi but have missed him every time he's played locally.



Brad with General Levi

I saw that he was playing in Bristol so I got some tickets. On the night just before we left from Frome to go to Bristol I left

everything I thought I didn't need. After being in Bristol for a few hours I realised that I had left my ID at home, I didn't think that I would be need it but they wouldn't let me in. I was very annoyed with myself.

The next day I went straight onto the internet and found out where else General Levi was playing on tour, some places were close and others were far away.

I thought about going to see him far away

but my brother encouraged me to go to a night that was closer to home, I chose to go and see him in Bournemouth.

On the 7th August I went to get the train at Frome station. The first one got cancelled, the second one had several changes and I'm not sure if I would have been able to get there so I went home but earlier on I had already sorted out a lift to get home the next day. I called my lift up and he was happy to take me to Bournemouth and bring me home the next day.



The night was awesome, lots of people were playing and General Levi was the best part of the night, I was in Jungle heaven and it was the first Jungle gig that I'd ever been to. He walked past me on his way to the stage and I took lots of pictures when he was performing. After he finished I thought I'd try my best to get a picture with him and I did, he also gave me a fist bump. I have finally seen one of my favourite artists and it was a dream finally come true.

The next edition and get in touch...

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We're not sure what will happen with the next edition. We hope we will be able to get out and meet with people again soon.

We will share the information when we know what is happening.

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.