



Learning Disability News March 2021

Southampton Mencap COVID 19 position statement – continued...!

2021 started in a way none of us wanted, with a second lockdown forcing another shutdown of our building based services. This was a huge disappointment to everyone who had gradually begun to return to our day services and short break activities which had reopened in September after several months of closure last year. As a result we increased our range of remote services and developed an extensive programme of Zoom sessions with two different topics each day throughout the week. We have been able to help by loaning out I pads to those who needed these to participate thanks to grants from the Lottery and the SCCCG. Our staff have kept in touch with everyone to check how they're doing and to keep them updated. We've kept the Mencap Centre and our phone lines open and we've responded to requests for support on an individual basis. We've been working closely with the Local Authority to review the measures needed for us to re-open safely as soon as we get the go ahead from Boris. We hope that this really is the last hurdle with the vaccine programme underway and we know that our staff and many of our service users and their carers have already received their first dose. We know that this has proved much harder for everyone to deal with this time around but there now seems to be some light at the end of the tunnel with perhaps some way yet to go. Thank you to everyone for your continued support and in particular our brilliant 'Team Mencap'. We really couldn't have managed this horrible situation without you all rising to the challenge of working in a very different way and showing true compassion to the situation many of our service users and their families have once again found themselves in. Finally, we hope to have some good news soon about re-opening but meanwhile please do get in touch and let us know if there is anything we can do to help. **Alexandra Iles, Southampton Mencap CEO**

Are you aware?

NHS figures released recently show that in the five weeks since the third lockdown began, Covid-19 accounted for 65% of deaths of people with learning disabilities. This is a group of people who die on average 20 years younger than the general population and yet many of them are still not prioritised for the vaccine. In addition, the Care Quality Commission said in December that inappropriate 'Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation' (DNACPR) notices had caused potentially avoidable deaths last year. This is shocking and is evidence that vulnerable people have encountered unacceptable discrimination during the pandemic and that their lives are seen as less important than others.



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Family (unpaid) carers provide the majority of care in our society



Those close to the elderly, the disabled and even those with severe dementia give a huge amount of support to their own cost in time and money. Until the Care Act 2014, they had received no official recognition from the state. But now senior figures and celebrities (like Rt Hon Sir Ed Davey, Kirsty Alsop and John Suchet) are starting to talk about their lives as family carers. There is talk of a question on caring in the next census. In Southampton, the city council has funded 'Carers in Southampton' to provide an information and support service for unpaid carers. It is a shame that it cut funding for SCA to provide a full day's care, transport and a cooked lunch for more than 300 older people each week, giving over six hours respite to the

family carer at a current cost of £45 per place. If we look carefully we will find someone young or old who is giving care. Take the initiative, introduce yourself and see if there is any way you can help. **Revd Brian Strevens, Executive Chairman of Carers in Southampton & Mencap trustee.**

Support from Carers in Southampton (CIS) 023 8058 2387

The Carers in Southampton service is able to offer advice and guidance on a range of issues, from carers' assessments, carers' cards to emergency planning. The website is packed full of up to date and relevant information www.carersinsouthampton.co.uk

If you are confident that your GP knows you are a carer or you are in receipt of a carer's benefit you will automatically be invited very soon for the vaccine. If you are unsure and you are a primary carer who has not yet been offered or had the COVID-19 vaccine you can complete the form on the CIS website to pre-register through the service. www.carersinsouthampton.co.uk

Carer COVID Vaccine – pre register as a carer to receive this



RADIO TAXIS (023) 80 666 666

OVER 70? OR VULNERABLE? DUE TO BE VACCINATED?

Radio Taxis are offering elderly customers over the age of 70 **FREE TAXI** journeys to Covid-19 vaccination centres in Southampton area* **CALL OUR TEAM TO BOOK**

Well done **Radio Taxis (Southampton)** for setting up their 'Cab and Job' scheme offering a free taxi to help people over 70 or in the high risk/vulnerable category to and from COVID-19 vaccination centres in the local Southampton area. To find out if you are eligible to use the scheme call them on **023 8066 6666**

Oakley Road Vaccine Hub in Southampton is operating a non-booking clinic every day for the next 7 days **only** (from Wed. 24th Feb) from 12:30-15:30 for eligible groups, including all carers in receipt of the carer's allowance. There could be a wait but this means you can go without an appointment accompanied by your cared for person if they haven't yet had the vaccine. Tel **023 8029 6904**

Stop Press

All people on the learning

disability register should now be prioritised for a Covid-19 vaccine, the joint committee on vaccination has advised the Government. This means 150,000 more people at higher risk being offered a jab more quickly in England. Well done to everyone involved in shining a light on this unacceptable situation and getting it changed through tireless campaigning and the added weight of DJ Jo Whitley's plea that people such as her sister, Frances, should be vaccinated as quickly as possible.





Small, local and strong

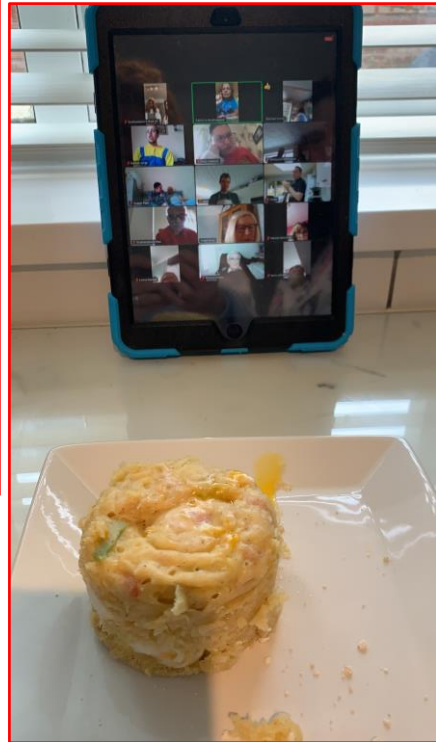
A not-for-profit organisation working with the Southampton Learning Disability community

Good News Blog



Spring and love is in the air...

We're loving the arts and crafts being produced during our daily Zoom sessions. From hearts to flowers, it looks like you're all romantics at heart, and we love to see you expressing that in a creative way!



Southampton City Art Gallery Project

We've teamed up with Southampton City Art Gallery for a really cool Zoom-based opportunity starting in March.

Twelve lucky people who have shown particular enthusiasm in art will be starting an exciting new project with Southampton City Art Gallery. **World of Watercolour** will be taught over 6 Zoom sessions and we can't wait to see what amazing creations they come up with! As always we'll be sharing the artwork here so keep an eye out!

Zoom anyone?

You've been loving our Zoom sessions so we've given you even more to choose from and to fill up your day depending on your interests! Each session regularly attracts around 15 of you so it can get fairly lively! Here's a photo showing Fiona's Egg Mug Muffin after the 'Cooking with Pula' session. Fiona loves these sessions so much she even does them in her pyjamas!

FairPlay Update

FairPlay members received their 'Spread A Little Love' Activity Pack and seeds to grow a beautiful Sunflower! We're hoping that they share their completed art work and budding Sunflowers with us!



Carers Assessments

Are you caring for someone who has just turned 18 or will soon be approaching this age?

You will be entitled to a Carers Assessment to evaluate your need for support and services and eligibility for a personal wellbeing payment.

Register with Carers in Southampton for a supported assessment by phoning
023 8058 2387

Treat me well

Campaigning to transform how the NHS treats people with a learning disability in hospital

We were pleased to get a grant from National Mencap which will help us carry on with our work with the Treat me well campaign in Southampton.

The group will be meeting regularly to talk about life during the pandemic and how they plan to influence hospitals and GP surgeries to improve the ways in which they deal with people with learning disabilities.

Mencap Zoom Sessions

How these have been making us feel all warm and fuzzy!

*A member being supported by dad when normally care is very much mum led;

*Parents joining in where support isn't strictly needed but just because they are interested!

*Seeing how the sessions are managing to keep everyone connected

*A fleeting kiss between mum and son at the start of a session;



*Big smiles and an excited dance for all to see by one of the members;

*when they tell us how to use zoom!

Involving our members....one of our Treat me Well members, Hannah, was supported on a zoom session recently to meet other leaders and find out what's going on with the campaign in other areas. She said *"I am proud to be part of this campaign and appreciate all the help I've had especially around my fear about needles and the COVID-19 vaccine. Thank you all for your help and for inviting me to this meeting and for helping people with learning disabilities"*.

We hope you have found this newsletter interesting and informative; we welcome all feedback on its contents. If you have any news relevant and helpful to children, young people or adults with learning disabilities and their families/carers please let us know when we will do our best to include these in future editions. If you have not received LD News directly from Southampton Mencap and would like to be added to the mailing list, or alternatively no longer wish to receive it, please let us know.

Disclaimer – articles do not necessarily carry an endorsement from Southampton Mencap