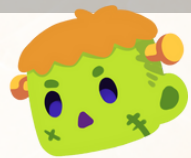


IN THE L P

We're back with what's happening at Assert

Welcome to the Assert newsletter! We are pleased to publish our October edition of the newsletter. This newsletter contains information about how our staff are providing support through different services, our upcoming activities and events and member stories. We hope you enjoy reading it, as much as we did writing it!



WE HOPE YOU HAD A SPOOK-TACULAR HALLOWEEN!



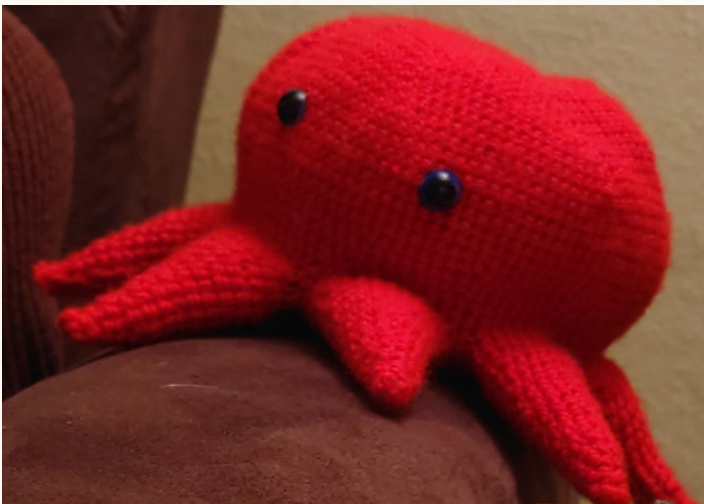
TAKING UP NEW HOBBIES

by Tara Edwards

Tara has taken up a lot of new and interesting hobbies since Covid-19. Here's a few that she shared with us with some lovely pictures.

We hope this can give you some ideas!

Crocheting Toys



Pyrography (wood burning)



Stained Glass Making



Daimond Painting



PHOTOGRAPHY

by Feej

My father is an excellent photographer so obviously as a contrary and rebellious teen I did everything but pick up a camera. I left home at 16, then at 17 for my birthday, I asked for a camera. I was living in a much-loved squat-like building with a serious lack of locks. So, I being particularly intelligent, shoved my new camera under my bed to be promptly stolen before even a shutter was snapped. I didn't pick up a camera again till many years later and wonder if I had picked it up at 17 would things have been different? Would I have seen a different world? Understood a little more?

Somewhere in most of my photography is a human being either up close portraits or woven in street scenes. This, to me, makes little sense as I prefer my dog to most people and my room and my things to the hectic movement and blur of the streets. But I am drawn to photograph some people, light in them!!

I have bad eyes, so often I don't see people clearly but close up through the lens, I can see and in that second, the shutter clicks!

"It is silent in that breath, I am present, I am there, and in that, there is a connection."

Feej

SOME PHOTOS BY FEEJ!



SOME PHOTOS BY FEEJ!



SOME PHOTOS BY FEEJ!



SOME PHOTOS BY FEEJ!



FIGMENT ARTS/ ASSERT COLLABORATION SHOW CASE BASED ON TALKING TOGETHER RESEARCH

by Dr. Gemma Williams

A couple of years ago, as part of my PhD research looking at autistic communication, we held a small community engagement project at Assert, called "Talking Together", where Assert members held short conversations about their experiences of loneliness with someone they knew well, an autistic person who was a stranger to them, and a non-autistic stranger. These formed the basis of my research analysis.

Flash-forward to my present fellowship and one of the projects I had funding for was to work with Figment Arts to support autistic and learning disabled artists to develop some animated videos: one sharing the findings from the research in an accessible way, and other where the artists have made creative responses to the themes of autistic communication and loneliness. For the second phase of the project, David (from Figment Arts) sent a call out through Assert and we had lots of Assert members come along on different days to learn new skills and help with things like additional artwork, voice over work and stop-motion animation. It was really fun! Some weeks ago, we had a celebration event at the Rose Hill with over 40 people attending to come and see the videos and learn a bit more about autistic communication.

Working with Figment Arts and the autistic artists on these videos has been a dream project. It was important to me to ensure my research findings were genuinely accessible, as unfortunately research often isn't. I'm a big believer of 'nothing about us without us'.

Gemma



Gemma at the conference

Click [here](#) for more pictures and videos from the launch night!

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

by Mark Bromfield

Welcome to the October newsletter. We now have King Charles III on the throne. The state funeral of the late queen was very moving.

Thankfully we are all getting help with energy costs from the government as well.

At Assert, we continue to do our best to enable and support as best we can. We have a wonderful staff team that work so hard. Including the production of this newsletter (your newsletter) by Prachi Pal, among many other things that Prachi undertakes for Assert.

AUTISM SUPPORT ADVISOR

By Alex Barbuti

Hi,

Firstly, thanks to our three newsletter contributors this month, it's great to hear from you, the community this newsletter is for. Please continue to get in touch with your recommendations, reviews and news.

Welcome too, to all our new Assert clients. We hope you enjoy getting involved with our services and groups.

Over on our Facebook page last month we've shared opportunities from Phoenix Art Space, Carousel, Money Advice Plus and Brighton and Hove Music for Connection. If you see something you want others to know about, let us know. For the dog lovers among you there's also a glimpse into my big friendly dog's first foray into the office, he kept me company last week and enjoyed the attention of the Community Base receptionists! One of my favourite things about registering new clients is meeting all your pets virtually!

I'll be updating you about an event I attended to get to know some of our neighbours in Community Base. There are so many fantastic organisations here with us and I'm looking forward to finding out more about them and ensuring our signposting service is as comprehensive as possible.

ASSERT OPERATIONS

By Debbie Taylor

Hi everyone,

Welcome to October's Newsletter.

There have been several changes to the Assert staff team recently, due to maternity cover for Alex Little (Benefits Case Worker) and Julia Martinez (Life Skills Learning Coordinator) and Jenna Dadak (Autism Case Worker) who has returned to university to train as an Occupational Therapist.

Megan Archer is covering for Alex Little while she is on maternity leave, is now taking enquiries, but please be aware she does have a waiting list. If you need urgent support due to Benefits review documentation being sent to you, please do not leave any requests for support until nearer any deadlines you have been given, as it may not be possible for Assert to support you in a timely way in this situation.

Maria is covering for Julia. Currently this is delivering Exploring Autism Courses and both Life Skills 1 and 2 courses. We welcome Maria's significant experience having been a member of the Assert staff team prior to her own maternity leave, this is a new role for her. There are often waiting lists for courses and please recognise they do require a commitment to attending the sessions, which are now being delivered in-person. We know there are often reasons that can prevent attendance, but if this happens often in what are very small group sessions, it can mean the course cannot continue. But please do let her know if you are interested in participating in future courses.

We also extend a very big welcome to Riley-Fynn Morrell who started with Assert on the 10th October as Assert's Autism Case Worker. Once his induction period is complete, Riley will let you know about signing up for support sessions. There will be a waiting list. Now the weather isn't quite as settled, we will be moving Coffee Club to an indoors venue (currently being confirmed). It is expected this will resume early November.

It was lovely to have Prachi Pal, Assert's Digital and Marketing and Marketing Assistant join us for an in-person Team Meeting. Prachi starting working for Assert during the pandemic and then returned to India and has worked remotely since then, so to meet in person was a first and very special.

Assert's long established informal monthly social Drop-In on Tuesday evenings, resumed in person a while ago. It has been by invite only, but we are feeling we can safely open it up further now. If you are interested in attending, please do let me know and I may be able to add you to the list of invitees. debbiet@assertbh.org.uk

Lastly just a couple of photos saying goodbye to Jenna, lovely food in glorious sunshine. We wish Jenna well and it will be the world of Occupational Therapy's gain.

Best wishes,
Debbie





LIFE SKILLS COURSES

By Maria Riaza Fernandez

Hi everyone!

We have started to deliver our courses face to face in community base. At the moment we are offering the following courses:

Life Skills 1: Communication and friendships.

During these sessions there are plenty of opportunities to have guided discussions in a small group about the individual challenges that participants experience, as well as to talk about different strategies to better navigate the frequently overwhelming interpersonal relationships world.

Life Skills 2: Organisation and Self Management skills.

During these sessions we explore different topics and discuss what strategies might be useful to feel in control of our home and daily responsibilities. We talk about household management, routine and wellbeing and organisation and planning, and how to set boundaries.

Exploring Autism

We have successfully completed the first two face to face groups of exploring autism and will be starting a new cohort soon.

In these 7 sessions we do learn about Autism and the diagnosis, the spectrum, sensory processing, routine and coping strategies and communication styles.

Cookery course

We have started cookery course, and really enjoying learning how to cook some new recipes and more importantly, tasting those delicious meals!

Please let me know if you are interested in joining any of the above courses by emailing me on maria@assertbh.org.uk or lifeskills@assertbh.org.uk.

Maria

Adult Learning Coordinator

BENEFITS SERVICE

By Megan Archer

Hi everyone,

It is no secret that things are quite tough for many people at the moment. If you are struggling to pay your bills, rent, travel, or buy food, please get in touch.

If you're on any of the following benefits

- Universal Credit
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Income Support
- Pension Credit
- Child Tax Credit
- Working Tax Credit

and you were eligible for a benefits payment within the assessment period of 26/08/22 to 25/09/22, you should receive your cost-of-living payment between the 8th and 23rd of November.

If you're on disability benefits and were receiving them (or entitled to them, for example, with a backdated claim) you should by now have received your £150 extra payment. If you have not received this, you can report it missing here: <https://secure.dwp.gov.uk/report-a-missing-cost-of-living-payment/welcome>

There is support available through the council as well, for emergency help with food, energy bills and other essentials. You can call them or apply online here: <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/benefits/help-and-support/get-emergency-help-food-energy-bills-and-other-essentials>

Lastly a bit of good news! We have been given access to a little bit more money to distribute to those struggling from the Household Fund. Please get in touch if you would like to apply for it. Please be aware that we will have to prioritise people who have not received this kind of support for us in previous rounds, but please still apply if you need it. **The deadline to apply is on Monday 12th of December. Please get your applications in by this date.**

If you need support with any of the above forms, contact me. I have a small waiting list and anticipate that the household fund will keep me busy, so there may be delays in arranging appointments but I will get back to you.

Take care out there everyone!

Megan Archer

benefits@assertbh.org.uk

WINTER HOUSEHOLD FUND

Assert are pleased to have again been awarded funding from Brighton and Hove Council. This time in the Summer to help support people with the ongoing cost-of-living increases. This means we can offer funding to support those of you who are finding it hard to pay your energy bills or buy essential items, or find you have no spare money left after doing this.

We can award this funding to support you with:

- Gas/ water/ electric bills
- Food
- Clothing
- Costs related to energy, food and water, such as boiler service/ repair, or purchase of items such as fridges, freezers or ovens or household items (such as bedding or blankets, essential cooking items, essential toiletries such as soap and sanitary products)
- Limited support for other costs such as broadband, phone bills, car repairs, bike repairs, other transport costs etc.

If you or someone you care for are struggling with any of the above and live in Brighton and Hove, please get in touch.

There is no application form. But we need to know the category above you would like to apply for this financial support. Please be aware that we may need to prioritise those who have not received previous support from this scheme, but please don't let this prevent you from applying.

You do not have to be in receipt of benefits to be eligible for this funding. If you feel that you would benefit from this, but think you might not be entitled to it, please do get in touch to talk about your individual situation.

**Please contact our Benefits Advisor, Megan, to apply for this funding:
Benefits@assertbh.org.uk**

WINTER HOUSEHOLD FUND

The deadline for applications is **Monday 12th December at midday**. If there is any funding left after this, we will open it up for a second round of applications. Please be aware, that when we offered this funding in the Summer, we were not able to open it up for a second round due to the high level of response.



SHARE YOUR VOICE AND FEEDBACK IN THE ASSERT NEWSLETTER



Assert would love to hear more from you!

Your voice and feedback are important to us and this newsletter is a space to amplify your voices, experiences, opinions and contributions. We would love to receive your write ups, drawings, puzzles, poems, photographs, articles etc. on topics that interest you and which can benefit other clients too. We will be publishing these in our monthly newsletter. If you would like to be anonymous, we will respect your decision.

Please email your submissions at supporters@assertbh.org.uk.

DONATE



DONATE TO ASSERT: YOUR SUPPORT IS VITAL TO US

Donations to Assert are vital in keeping the charity operational and free at the point of service. We are incredibly grateful for any donations received. You can donate to us through PayPal or the 'donate' button on our Facebook page. You could also make donations in cash, via cheque or bank transfer, host your own fundraiser or use the link below:

<https://www.paypal.com/uk/fundraiser/charity/2333838>

**FOR MORE INFORMATION AND REGULAR UPDATES, FOLLOW US
ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS:**



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ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

PEER DISCUSSION GROUP

WILL BE RE-INITIATED IN NEAR FUTURE

COFFEE CLUB

KEEP AN EYE ON THE EMAILS

PARENT, PARTNERS AND CARERS GROUP

EVERY 4TH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

ACTIVE CLUB

WILL BE RE-INITIATED IN NEAR FUTURE

COOKERY COURSE

STARTED IN OCTOBER

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US VIA

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