

IN THE LOOP

We're back with what's happening at Assert

Welcome to the Assert newsletter! We are pleased to publish our April 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!

LOUD

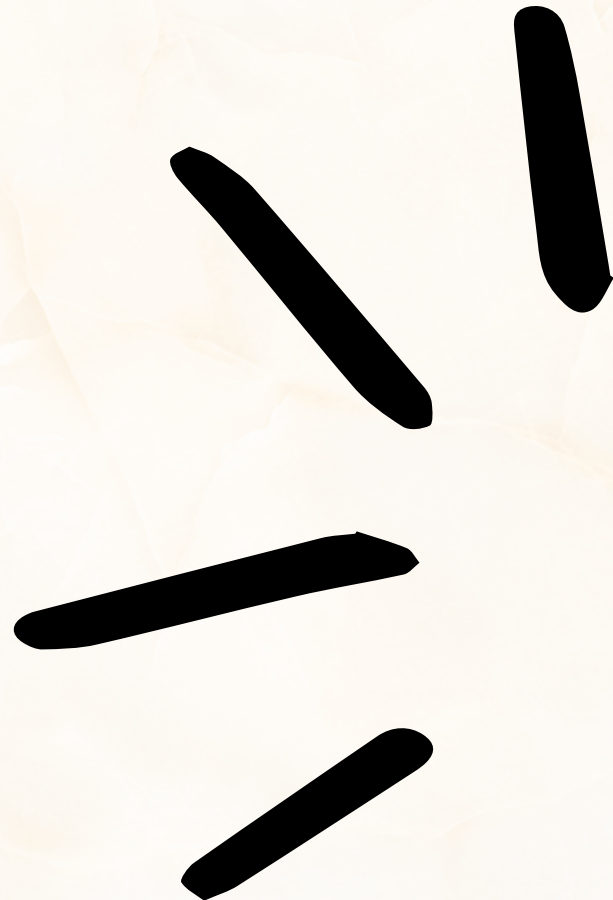
by Debra Stuart

Somebody moved,
and the house fell down.
Someone coughed.
A continent split.
It was the end of the world
again and again.

Ears were too small
to hold the noise.
And eyes too tired
to cope or care for movement.
Swimming the foreign language
of their native tongue.

Questions...

Drip dripping...
Like Chinese water torture..
Every second opening out
to agonising centuries of dark ages.



Questions...

Something shifted.
Something fell away
lolling and deflated.
Devoid of composure.
Robbed of meaning.
Losing breath under memory.
Exploding.
To come up for air.
To return to its beginning.

ASSERT OPERATIONS

By Debbie Taylor

Hi everyone,

I did share in the last newsletter that I would be leaving Assert; however, I am currently still here, as I wanted to bridge the gap briefly, as best I could, while recruitment for my post takes place.

The staff team are doing their very best to meet the growing demands on Assert services, with growing waiting lists in some cases. This may result in pausing our new registrations waiting list for a period of time. It is also hoped that some successful strategic work will be undertaken in the future in recognition of the increasing needs within the autistic community. You will be consulted on ideas, and I encourage you to get involved when invited to do so.

On another note.....I did want to share with you some photos of another lovely day at Stanmer, offered by Rona and Helen at 'Hearts and Flowers'. They have a plot of land in Stanmer Organics. This day was dedicated to understanding and working towards creating a global garden. We learned more about ways to increase biodiversity, build a bug refuge, and plant seeds for bee and moth-friendly flowers. This included being provided with the treat of a talk from visiting Entomologist Mike Edwards. I think we realised bees are important but learned just how important they are. We really do need to care about them.

We also had the opportunity to use drills and saws to create our bug refuge to take home, health and safety prevailed....I'm pleased to say..... before planting a variety of flower seeds especially attractive to insects. It was a delightful day, but my highlight was learning from the considerable knowledge of one of our Assert participants, whose knowledge of the bug world was amazingly informed. Some photos from our day.....

Hearts



Flowers







Look out for promotional mailchimp circular, but the next scheduled day with Hearts and Flowers will be **1st June** and will include an art activity 'Hape Zome' - flower pounding, as well as care for the garden flowers and ourselves... please get in touch if you are interested or would like more information.

Debbie

Assert Operations Manager

PPC (Parents, Partners, Carers Group)

We currently meet on the 4th Tuesday of the month, 7.00 PM upstairs at the Earth and Stars pub in Church Street, Brighton. If you haven't been along before, you would be very welcome to attend. It's very informal and friendly, and most attendees report it is really helpful to have a space where you don't have to explain yourself, don't feel judged, and may even have a bit of fun.....but crying is fine too. As a parent, this group was my first introduction to Assert well over 12 years ago, and I have met some very lovely, caring people as a result.

Although I will be leaving Assert, there will be an automated monthly reminder for PPC, but always remember it's the **4th Tuesday of the month, not necessarily the last Tuesday.**

I will likely continue to attend as a parent, as I do currently. A parent has started the process of setting up a WhatsApp group for PPC to maintain regular contact. If you have attended and would like to be added, please let me know your details, and I will pass them on.

In the short term, I can be contacted at debbiet@assertbh.org.uk

Drop In

The Assert Drop-In is held on the **second Tuesday evening of each month**, in the Conference Room at Community Base at 7.00 PM. If you are interested in attending or would like to know more about this activity, please do get in touch. Look out for the regular mail chimp flyer, which will be circulated by e-mail or by post. Do give the office a call and someone should be able to give you more details. 01273-234850 or 01273-234853.

BENEFITS SERVICE

By Megan Archer

Hi everyone,

I hope you are all well. This month I have to make you aware that as my maternity cover draws to a close, there will be a gap in the service between the middle of June and August before Alex returns to her role as Benefits Case Worker.

I have a few appointments left to offer toward the end of May, but after this, I will be mostly completing work done with those I am already engaged with. If you contact me and I am unable to support you, I will add you to a waiting list for the resumption of the service in August. If you need support sooner, please contact:

Possability People: <https://possabilitypeople.org.uk/about/contact-us/> or on 01273 89 40 40

St Lukes: <https://www.stlukesadviceservice.org.uk/> or on 01273 54 92 03

St Lukes has a waiting list of between 3-5 weeks for a PIP application or mandatory reconsideration appointment, and they offer face-to-face or telephone appointments. They are currently able to support people to begin the process of first-tier tribunal appeals, however, they are unable to act as a representatives for new clients. They will also provide advice on Universal Credit queries, but will not support with new universal credit claims.

For support with new UC claims, contact the Citizens Advice Bureau's help to claim service here: <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/help-to-claim/> or on 0800 144 8 444

Money Advice Plus may also be able to help, online at: <https://www.moneyadviceplus.org.uk/advice-and-support/>

Best wishes,
Megan Archer
Benefits Case Worker
Benefits@assertbh.org.uk

AUTISM SUPPORT ADVISOR

By Alex Barbuti

Hello everyone,

A big hi to everyone who has registered with me recently.

I've been on leave for the past few weeks - some fun, some gardening, and some unexpected chickenpox parenting!

We have lots coming up at Assert, including more with Hearts and Flowers over the coming months, so I hope there'll be lots to interest you if you've recently joined us.

You will probably be aware of the upcoming local elections on **4th May**. For the very first time (and from each election from then on) it will be necessary to have photo ID or a Voter Authority Certificate with you to be able to vote.

For information on what photo ID is accepted please read the following information, and **don't forget to vote!**

<https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id>

If you don't have photo ID and missed the deadline to get a Voter Authority Certificate for this election, why not apply for it now in time for the next general election.

Festival season

I love this time of year in Brighton because the Festival, Fringe and Artists Open Houses are all fast-approaching. If you are performing or taking part in any of these events and want to share them with other Assert clients, or have any top tips, please let us know. We'll be sharing our must-see events on our Facebook page.

First up, **"Stimmicanto"** runs from the 5th - the 17th of May and is autistic comedian Paggy's "journey through a literal mind where unfiltered joy is strictly encouraged": <https://tinyurl.com/bddj6h2r>

Our friends at Figment Arts are hosting an Open Studio on Saturdays and Sundays throughout May. All materials are provided, all are welcome and participants will have the opportunity to contribute to a gigantic evolving artwork. For more info and free tickets, sign up here:

<https://tinyurl.com/3ksx7a9t>

Escaping the city

If escaping the city is more your thing, from Monday 24th April there is a NEW weekday bus service from Brighton to Stanmer Village, making Stanmer Organics, One Garden and the village more accessible. If you haven't been before, the walled garden is a hidden gem of evolving nature and such a peaceful space close to the city (with very good cake).

See the new timetable here: <https://tinyurl.com/33brekpy>

Brighton and Hove Recovery College's Summer Term is enrolling soon.

If you are new to it, Brighton and Hove Recovery College uses education in a supportive learning environment to help people with mental health challenges become experts in their own self-care and recovery. Its courses are all co-produced and co-delivered by people with experience of mental health challenges and people who have gained experience through training or work.

Why not pop along to its Summer Term Open Day Event at the Brighthelm Centre to talk to trainers and students about the College and register your interest in courses.

The Open Day is on Wednesday, 3rd May at 11am - 3pm at The Brighthelm Centre, North Road, Brighton, BN1 1YD.

If you have any questions, please contact the college directly on: 01273 749500 / recoverycollege@southdown.org

Enrolment will be open from the 3rd to the 15th of May, and all courses are free of charge.

Have a happy May, everyone.

Alex Barbuti
Autism Support Advisor

LIFE SKILLS COURSES

By Maria Riaza Fernandez

Hi everyone!

I hope you are all enjoying the longer days and the sunshine.

We recently finished our cookery course with the Community Kitchen where we enjoyed making delicious food, such as soups, bread, batch cooking, scones and chocolate muffins.

We also went to visit PLOT 22. We had an amazing day, picked herbs around the allotment, and made flatbread on the fire.

The next Cookery course is planned for September. I will send an email to everyone with more details once I start the recruitment process.



We also finished our course in communication skills, including a day out to the bowling alley.

The next dates for the Life Skills course are yet to be planned, but if you are interested in undertaking it, please contact me.

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.



We have recently started our **Life Skills 2 Organisation and Self Management skills**.

There were an overwhelming number of enquires for this course following the advert, I have added everybody who emailed me asking to join the course to the waitlist, and I will be in contact as soon as I have a space to offer. Apologies for not replying to all emails this time, the number of emails and deadlines at that point, plus me being unwell for a couple of weeks, made it impossible.

Some of the topics we talked about during these sessions are household management, routine, and well-being, organisation, and planning, and how to set boundaries.

Other courses we offer are our Exploring Autism courses: In these 7 sessions we do learn about Autism and the diagnosis, the spectrum, sensory processing, routine and coping strategies, and communication styles.

Please contact me if you are interested in any of these courses: maria@assert.bh.org.uk

DIGITAL AND MARKETING ASSISTANT

By Prachi Pal

Hi everyone,

Thank you for continuously sharing your submissions in the newsletter; super helpful for us at Assert. **Yours is the most important voice in this newsletter!**

We keep trying something new with the newsletter - such as embedding links, icons, pictures, theme-based design, etc., to make it more engaging for you. Your feedback is very welcome.

If there's anything that you want this newsletter to have, please write to me at supporters@assertbh.org.uk with your suggestions! We would love to make it more customized according to your preferences.



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. 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:**



/ASSERTBANDH



@ASSERT_BH

Hello MAY

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES CALENDAR - WATCH OUT FOR EMAILS!

DROP IN

EVERY 2ND TUESDAY EVENING

PARENT, PARTNERS AND CARERS GROUP

EVERY 4TH TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

HEARTS AND FLOWERS SCHEDULED DAY

1ST JUNE

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US VIA

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