



We all start each New Year with high hopes. Back in January I was really confident that 2020 would be a real goodie. How wrong I was! We are now nearly at the end and 2021 holds out some real promise of better days to come. A vaccine is on its way and, by Spring, we should be able to get back to some sort of normal. Much as we have longed to get all our activities going again, lockdowns and common sense have decreed that it would be foolish to do so. But we haven't been idle and all sections of KingsCare are joining me in this newsletter to let you know what's been happening and wish you all a Happy Christmas.

Maggie Bonnell, Manager



Frustrated with the problem of trying to work out a sensible and safe way of taking patients to appointments whilst maintaining social distancing, we decided to copy the idea adopted by the patient support group in Ashburton and we bought a taxi and called it 'George'. Because of the screen across it we can now safely take patients to medical appointments. The volunteers love to drive it and the patients feel safe with it. Many thanks go to NFU Mutual whose generous donation enabled us to buy it and Newton Abbot Rotary Club who are contributing to the running costs. Their stickers and our logo make George very smart and easy to spot!

Here's hoping for a speedy roll out of the vaccine.

Ian Whyte, Transport Manager



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The **Wellbeing** team have kept busy throughout the Covid 19 Pandemic. Initially, during the first lockdown the team were busy supporting patients by phone when visiting had to stop and were heavily involved in shopping activities for many weeks. This was a challenging time for all with home working becoming an essential part of working life and our KingsCare team being split into mini bubbles for working in the office. In addition some members of the team were forced to shield.

As time progressed and restrictions were relaxed somewhat over the summer months, the team were once again able to make visits, often meeting people outside in their gardens or in outdoor public spaces such as parks or pavement cafes. Face to face working with clients is so important to us and it was a relief to be able to do this once again.

Unfortunately as winter has taken hold, outdoor visits have once again become difficult and the second lockdown has meant that the team have relied largely on phone contact with patients.

We all hope that things are moving in the right direction and that our work will get back to near normal soon. We hope that you are able to celebrate the season as well as you can.

Groups

When the first Lockdown hit, all our social groups and exercise groups were suspended. This was a major blow to everybody concerned and, of course, especially our participants and volunteers. During the summer and right up to the second lockdown, we were able to restart and run small groups three times a week with very limited numbers including our Avenue Exercise group and Kingsteignton Tai Chi, along with a monthly carers group. Although it has been difficult it was so important to get these groups going again and we hope to reopen them as soon as conditions mean that we can do it safely.

Keep safe everyone

David Clifford, Assistant Manager

Hello everybody

We are coming to the end of a year that has been pretty rotten for everybody, especially those who had mental health needs even before the advent of COVID. Since the onset of the virus and the first lockdown in March however, many more of you have experienced challenges both mentally and emotionally which have been made worse for many through fear and isolation.

Because of Government guidelines Briony and myself (the Mental Health Team here at KingsCare) had to change our working practices and instead of seeing people in their homes or out in the community we have had to work from home giving emotional support on the telephone. We have also been facilitating online wellbeing courses for the people we work with. We do realise, however, that those of you without access to computers or smartphones have been unable to reach out and access the online video contact and engagement that has helped to maintain your mental health.

The good news is that the KingsCare Mental Health Team are now seeing people again in and around Kingsteignton and Newton Abbot and in the new year we hope to offer more groups and meetings out in the community. Things are now looking up with the advent of new vaccines on the horizon and we can see that there is light at the end of the tunnel and that hopefully there will be a return to some sort of normality.

Briony and I have been humbled by the bravery and resilience you have all shown throughout the pandemic and we would like to say Keep looking after yourselves as you have been doing throughout this year. Stay safe, keep well and have a very enjoyable festive season!

The KingsCare Mental Health Team

We've missed seeing you all at our monthly Memory Cafe and Carers/Activity Group that have been on hold since March of this year. We're ready and waiting to welcome you back to these groups as soon as possible. Fingers crossed that will be in the spring of 2021 if not before. We really can't wait. In the meantime we have been keeping busy supporting people by phone and carrying out one to one well-being interventions. Jackie's carers group has continued to meet virtually and we're experimenting with running some virtual groups for people with dementia in early 2021

Sending warmest thoughts and best wishes for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2021.

Jackie and David

Dementia Support Workers

Our charity shop has been closed more than it has been open for most of this year. However, with financial support from Teignbridge District Council through the Local Restrictions Support Grant and some hard work from the volunteers, it has survived the pandemic. The pavement shop has been outside on fine days creating an opportunity for passers-by to purchase books and low cost bits and pieces that helped people to while away the days of lockdown whilst not stepping foot inside the building. There was a customer the other Saturday who'd walked down from near the swimming pool to buy books that she simply couldn't get any place else giving her some exercise and a small sale for us. A win win!

Hopefully with everyone walking around more than usual, more people are now aware of the shop and the fantastic bargains that can be found inside.

Hoping to see you for some Christmas shopping soon

Team Hub



The #doitfordeaks volunteers have been really busy planning for future activities to keep people connected and engaged such as walks on Dartmoor and growing connections with Mental Health Muscles and local football clubs, some now wearing kit advertising KingsCare.



Meanwhile counselling sessions are now available with our volunteer counsellor, Tracie, at the Dartmoor Centre. Barratt Homes made a large donation earlier in the year and the football clubs regularly still, despite Covid restrictions, raise money for the project at matches. A huge thank you goes to all those whose support is so important to keep this project thriving and maintain the work to take the stigma out of mental health pursuing the fundamental aim of ensuring that no one in our community feels that taking their own life is their only option, however low they are feeling.

Briony Enright – Mental Health Support Worker

KingsCare have given a lot more support to unpaid carers during lockdown when many face to face support services such as day centres or support groups had been closed due to the risk of spreading Coronavirus. Many carers suffered exhaustion and increased stress after months of caring without a break. This has had a significant effect on their overall wellbeing. This invisible army of dedicated individuals receive relatively little attention. The UK benefits from £132 billion worth of unpaid care, the equivalent of a second NHS. The cost of caring has increased during lockdown with extra food, heating and activities to be found.

We had a short window between both lockdown where we were able to restart our `For You` Carers Support Group at the Avenue Church. This was a very welcome break from caring to spending time with and sharing personal stories/difficulties/ good things with other carers who had similar difficulties during lockdown. Our Carers Rights Day Zoom meeting was a great success and well attended. Sadly, December`s support meeting will be via Zoom, but we will make it as festive as possible.

Our Christmas wish for you is to have a very Happy Christmas; we are mindful that for many carers Christmas may not be such a happy occasion. Please, don`t be afraid to ask for help from family, friends or support services.

Care Direct 0345 1551 007 NHS 999 or 111 / NHS Carers Direct 0300 123 1053
 Police 999 or 101 Fire Service 999 Samaritans 116 123
 Childline 0800 1111 Devon Domestic Abuse Helpline 0345 155 1074
 Carers UK Helpline 0808 808 7777 open over Christmas & New Year

Rosemary Newman, Carer Lead KingsCare

... and, finally, if you haven't heard of our latest money raising plan, we've signed up with OneLottery. Every week someone who plays in the draw for KingsCare will win at least £10, someone, nationally will win £25,000.



It's what we do

Don't forget to shop at the Coop. We are delighted to announce that we are one of their good causes for the next 11 months.

We have also been awarded a grant of £5,000 a year for the next 3 years by the Masonic Charitable Foundation for which we're very grateful.



We all, at KingsCare, wish you a very Happy Christmas and a so much better 2021.