

# COALITION NEWS

## Get More Active Special Edition



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# Welcome from Nikki

Dear Coalition Members,

I'm very pleased to be writing to you as the new Chief Executive of Surrey Coalition of Disabled People. How lucky am I to work with lovely, inspiring people. I'm really excited about working with you over the coming months.

We have focused this issue on getting active. Spring has arrived and with the longer days on their way, it's a great time of year to get out for a walk or a wheel or just spend some time outside. Katy, our physical activity navigator has a packed programme for us this year!

The past three months have certainly been busy. We have been 'regulars' at the houses of parliament during February, with a group of members travelling to Number 10 Downing Street. We delivered a letter to support the National Federation of the Blind's petition to keep staff in train station ticket offices and keep guards on trains. More on this in this issue.

I also had the privilege of presenting at the All Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology to talk to them about our Tech to Connect project.

In other campaigning news, we are pleased to have scheduled regular meetings with Surrey wheelchair services so we can feedback your experiences. Thank you to the people that have shared their experiences with us so far. We still want to hear from anybody that's used the service, so do get in touch!

You will have seen that we have launched our cost-of-living report. Thanks so much to all of you that took part, it has made such a difference. Sadly, the report makes for difficult reading, but we have been able to use the findings to secure further funding for our members via the Household Support Fund. We continue to share the findings across the county.

Finally, the mental health team have published an important piece of research on admissions and discharges from UK mental health hospitals. More on this in this issue.

I'm hoping to meet many of you at the events and meetings we have planned over the coming months. Thanks for your support while I find my feet in the new role.

With very best wishes

Nikki

# Mental Health Update



The IMHN has been working with the Surrey Mental Health Improvement Programme on collecting evidence on the common issue of being bounced inappropriately between mental health services without getting your needs met. The IMHN held a focus group with service users, and also discussed the issue with our local area Mental Health Stakeholder meetings with people who work in the services through meetings.

The mental health team has been helping Surrey County Council Adult Social Care to develop an architectural brief for supported housing for people with mental health support needs in Surrey. This brief will make it easier for this type of supported housing to be built once sites have been agreed on.

Three of our team have begun working on a project with Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Trust (SABP) community transformation team. The aim is to provide more mental health services within community settings. Our team will be engaging with Surrey residents, with a focus on reaching out to those who have the highest health risks to find out what it is they need from these services and to test whether once implemented they are meeting people's needs.

**Over the next month the IMHN will be doing some work on Serious Mental Illness Annual Physical Health checks, and are keen to hear from anyone who has had a health check in the last 2 years about the experience. Please contact [guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:guy.hill@surreycoalition.org.uk) if you can help.**

# Pathways to Change



Surrey Minority Ethnic Forum (SMEF) and the Independent Mental Health Network (IMHN) are currently working on a research project titled 'Pathways to Change', which will look at the experiences of South-Asian adults within Surrey-based mental health services. So far, the research team have gathered a steering group made up of mental health professionals, and service users and carers from South-Asian background, and have created a survey which will soon be distributed among South-Asian community groups.

SMEF and The Coalition hope this research project will shed light on the experiences of previously under-represented groups and help to improve the accommodation of cultural and religious needs within Surrey-based mental health services. To stay updated with the project, please visit [The Coalition website](#).

## Compassion in Crisis

A research project which explores and documents experiences of unplanned admissions to mental health hospitals. It focuses on the experiences of autistic individuals, individuals with learning disabilities and or/both. It will use narrative and visual methods to share the findings.

Find out more on our website - [Compassion in Crisis](#)

# In and out



The full report of the In and Out project, which looked at admissions to and discharges from UK mental health hospitals, has now been finalised and was published on The Coalition website on the 20th February.

The research team are currently gathering a recommendations group made up of mental health professionals, service users and carers, to discuss the findings of the project and to create recommendations aimed at improving mental health services. To stay updated with the progress of the recommendation group, please visit [The Coalition website](#).

**Surrey County Council knows that getting older and living longer is something we should all look forward to. However, living a healthy life and living well for yourself, including staying in your own home, can be more difficult for some people. The Living Well in Later Life Strategy is for older people and unpaid carers (those 65yrs and above) living in Surrey and details what the council and its partners will do to help make Surrey a place where people can make the most of their old age. The Older People's Commissioning Team would welcome your input to help shape this plan so it works for all residents.**

**If you would like to be contacted to be part of designing future services by feeding back through workshops, engagement events or phone calls, please follow Living Well in Later Life - Help shape the future plan for Older People - Surrey County Council - Citizen Space ([surreysays.co.uk](http://surreysays.co.uk))**

**Close 31st December 2030**

# Get Involved



The Involvement team have been really busy attending lots of events and meetings. We carried out an access all areas visit to the Surrey Heartlands Office at Millmead in Guildford. Our groups of five offered four pages of feedback and suggestions. We also made our first Tik Tok video which to date has received over 500 views!

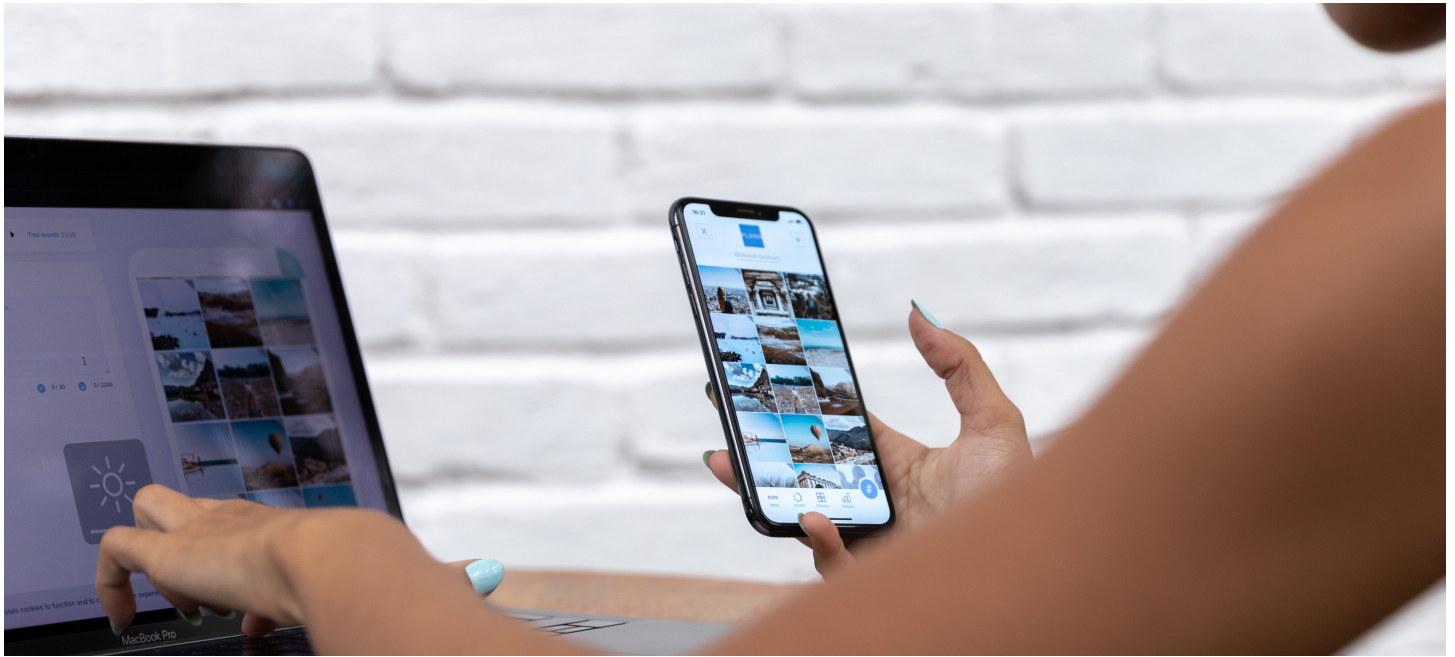
The Involvement team and some of our members were invited to RHS Wisley to look at their new exhibition in the Old Laboratory which is due to open to the public in March 2023. Again, we offered lots of feedback on what worked well and where improvements could be made.

We have been approached by the Chief Projectionist from Nova Cinema in Woking who asked if members could test boosted audio to help improve the cinema experience for those who are hard of hearing. The visit is due to take place in March and we will update you on how this went.

In February our Long-term Neurological Conditions Group met and were involved in discussions with the Neurosciences Collaboration Manager on the South West London and Surrey Neurosciences Network.

**If you would like to be involved in any of our activities in the future, please contact the Involvement team on [Involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:Involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk)**

# Technology Update



We helped the University of Surrey team to test a new platform that helps people to learn about phishing. A group of 8 people, over 60 years old gathered in our offices to test the platform and provide their feedback to the University of Surrey team to help improve it and develop it further. We will share details of how you can access the training module once they are publicly available.

Nikki presented as part of a panel on our Tech to Community Connect project to the All Party Parliamentary Group for Assistive Technology in Westminster. The attendees were MPs and Peers that are interested in the opportunities presented by assistive technology. It was interesting to hear of other services similar to Tech to Community Connect across the country, hopefully we can share good practice and collaborate in the future.

**Surrey County Council is consulting on the proposal to close Arundel House Residential Care Home in Banstead, owned and operated by Surrey County Council. Their overriding priority is the wellbeing of the residents and staff who they want to involve fully and sensitively. They welcome the views of everyone and any responses received will help when making a decision.**

**Consultation on the closure of Arundel House Residential Care Home run by Surrey County Council - Surrey County Council - Citizen Space ([surreysays.co.uk](https://surreysays.co.uk))**

**Closing date 18th April 2023**

# The Coalition's trip to Downing Street



On Monday 20th February, members and staff from Surrey Coalition of Disabled people travelled to Downing Street to hand in a petition signed by more than 150 organisations. All members of the group travelled into London independently by train, a freedom which could soon be denied to them if the proposed changes, which would entail closing ticket offices and removing guards from trains, come in to force.

Arriving at Downing Street, there was instant camaraderie with other organisations present, including the National Federation for the Blind, who organised the petition. We drew attention from passers by with our placards which had slogans including 'I have a right to travel by train safely', 'Keep ticket offices open' and 'We will not be ignored'. Jean was approached by a photography student who wanted to take a photo of her holding her placard for her A level project.

Finally our time slot arrived, and we entered Downing Street which was a surreal experience for us all. We were really hoping to get a glimpse of Larry the cat, but sadly he was nowhere to be seen! We approached the big black door and were given some last-minute instructions of protocol etc.

We gave Jonathan the task of announcing our presence with three very loud knocks on the famous door. We handed in our covering letter and explained that we were supporting the petition to request:





1: For all ticket offices to remain open and all manned stations to remain manned at all times with a safe level of staffing.

2: For all trains to have guards (also known as train managers or conductors) at all times

3. For all unmanned stations to become manned at all times with safe level of staffing.

The team from The Coalition made it clear that it is totally unacceptable that Disabled people face having their freedom to independently travel by train taken away from them, a freedom that most people take for granted. The Coalition asked that the Prime Minister reconsider the proposals as a matter of urgency.

After our big moment we all took it in turns to have our photos taken in front of one of the most famous doors in the world. Jonathan, Vikki and Jean were interviewed by ITV south and BBC Surrey.

The day turned out to be a fascinating experience for us, and one never to be forgotten.

# Our recent visit to the Riding for the Disabled Association (or RDA)



Recently we had an enjoyable visit to Epsom Riding for the Disabled Association (RDA). The Riding for the Disabled Association (or RDA) is a major UK charity with several affiliated branches run and managed by local teams as their own charitable organisation.

The Epsom branch is run solely by volunteers, many of whom have been with the charity for a number of years. The charity focuses on the therapeutic and health benefits of bringing people and horses together. Regular riding improves core strength, balance, and coordination. Attending a regular session can also help to combat isolation and loneliness and boost wellbeing. Epsom is certainly a popular centre holding sessions 7 days a week with over 300 registered riders and a long waiting list.

We met up at 11am with everyone wrapped up warmly to combat the chilly day and we were shown round to the stables by our guide for the day, Angela, who is one of the trustees and volunteers at the centre. A session had just started so we went over to the outdoor arena to watch. Epsom has an indoor and outdoor school so that riding can continue if the weather is particularly bad. They are also appealing for funding so that they can extend the facilities, put on more sessions and reduce that waiting list!



There were two riders in the outdoor arena with the rest in the indoor arena. Those that are able to will ride independently but, if necessary, there are volunteers to lead the horses as well as "side walkers" to help with balance. A session leader gives advice and directions - the leaders often work with occupational therapists to assist rehabilitation. Riders at Epsom have a wide variety of learning, sensory, and physical disabilities and all benefit from that special connection with a horse.

We met most of the horses, patting necks and scratching behind ears and hearing about their history. The horses are out in the fields grazing overnight unless the weather is bad, so of course, they were very hairy and muddy! Running the stables takes a large team of volunteers. The horses need to be fed, groomed and tacked up for the lessons, the stables, yard and tack need to be kept clean. There is even an equine chiropractor to keep the horses' backs healthy!

We all remarked on the lovely calm, relaxed and happy atmosphere in the stables. If you would like more information about getting involved with the RDA please contact Katy to find out more:

**To learn more about our Get More Activities, get in touch with Katy**  
**Email: [Katy.hubbard@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:Katy.hubbard@surreycoalition.org.uk)**  
**Phone/SMS: 07434 865062**

# Physical activities we offer



## Get More Active

We know that being more active can increase your energy, improve your sleep and you also get to spend time with others who share similar interests.

We can help you in the following ways:

One-to-one appointments

Weekly group meetings

Regular local activity updates

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People's monthly meet up

## Active Buddy

It can be daunting attending activities, so we offer an active buddy service. The active buddy will help you get to and from the activity and support you while you are there.

## Weekly Peer Support Group Meetings

These online meetings take place on a Friday morning at 11:30am.

Please contact Katy for more information.

# Active Buddy



I've never been good at sports, but have always wanted to give it a go. In school I never got the rules and always lacked confidence. Having Fibromyalgia and anxiety I always wanted someone understanding and supportive to go along with.

I saw the advert in the newsletter advertising the new scheme and jumped at the chance. I had a nice chat with Katy about my various additional health issues and needs and the sort of activities I'd be interested in trying. A few weeks later I heard from Charlotte my active buddy and we chatted about my goals and also what she would be interested in doing.

During our first chat Charlotte invited me to The Ladies celebration day, held at Eastwood Leisure centre. There was a huge programme of events. Charlotte and I started off playing badminton and there were lots of different games to improve core badminton skills. After a lovely free lunch we listened to a motivational talk from Surrey Care Trust. We then moved onto self-defence and then my favourite of the day, cricket, which I've never done before. It was interesting learning the basics and some tips about batting. After this we played some more fun games to hone our new skills.

There is a possibility of a new cricket club for women at the leisure centre if there is enough interest, which I'd like to join. Lastly, we all got together for a fun game of Rounders. I had lots of fun and felt inspired to do and try more.

Here's to more adventures.

Active Buddy service user

# Exciting Coalition announcement



We are participating in the UK's one and only disability sports triathlon - The superhero Tri. The event takes place this summer, August 12th at Dorney Lake, Windsor. It is a day full of fun, excitement, and team spirit! It's also a great opportunity to raise funds and awareness for The Coalition.

We are putting together a relay team or teams and are looking for willing participants to join! The relay is split into three sections: swim, bike, run/push. The key concept behind the Superhero Tri event is inclusivity and creativity. Superhero Tri says: "If you want flippers or floats in the water or need to use your powerchair, we make it possible. In fact, as far as we're concerned anything goes!". So, whatever your level of fitness or ability if you want to join in you can use whatever mobility aid you want to use!

We are also looking for people to come and cheer our teams on and encourage them around the course, as well as artistic people to help design and make superhero costumes. There are lots of ways you can get involved! Katy, our Physical Activity Navigator, will be helping to guide and give training advice to each participant through the months leading up to the event. Refreshment and transport will be provided by The Coalition for the day.

**If you want to join in or are interested in more information  
please contact Katy: Email:  
[katy.hubbard@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:katy.hubbard@surreycoalition.org.uk)  
SMS/Phone: 07434 865062**

# WEEKLY EVENTS

The following events are run every week and are free of charge. We look forward to seeing you there!

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY
Every Monday	11am - 12 pm	Virtual Café and craft discussion group
Every Tuesday	4pm - 5pm	Glee Club
Every Wednesday	2.30pm - 3.30pm	Book Chat
Every Thursday	2.30pm - 3.30pm	Quiz
Every Friday	11.30am - 12.30pm	Virtual Café and Get More Active discussion group

Key:

IMHN: Independent Mental Health Network

FoCUS: Forum of Carers and people who Use our Services (this is a forum for people who use, or have used, or care for someone who has used, services from Surrey and Borders NHS Partnership Trust).

DENS: Disability Empowerment Network

# EVENTS MARCH

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Wednesday 1st March	1pm - 2.30pm	SW FoCUS
Monday 6th March	1pm - 2.30pm	DENS - On Zoom only
Tuesday 7th March	10am - 11.30am	East and Mid FoCUS on zoom and in person at Park House, KT22 0AH
Thursday 9th March	10.30am - 12pm	West FoCUS on zoom and in person at Aldershot Health Centre, GU11 1AY
Monday 13th March	1pm - 2.30pm	North West FoCUS on zoom only
Monday 13th March	6pm - 7.30pm	Surrey Wide DENS on zoom only
Wednesday 15th March	10.30am - 12pm	South West DENS on zoom only
Thursday 16th March	4.30pm - 5.30pm	Ethnic Minority Mental Health Stakeholder Group on zoom only
Monday 20th March	10.30am - 12pm	East DENS on zoom and in person at YMCA Sports and Community Centre, RH1 6JJ
Tuesday 21st & Wednesday 22nd March	10am - 12pm	IMHN Empowerment training for members
Thursday 23rd March	10.30am - 12pm	Hard of Hearing Forum
Friday 24th March	1pm - 3pm	IMHN Coordinating meeting on zoom only



# EVENTS APRIL

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Monday 3rd April	1pm - 2.30pm	East and mid FoCUS on zoom only
Wednesday 5th April	1pm - 2.30pm	SW FoCUS in person at Guildford Baptist Church, GU2 4BE and on zoom
Tuesday 11th April	1pm - 2.30pm	NW FoCUS in person at Hythe Centre, TW18 3HD and on zoom
Wednesday 12th April	10am - 11am	NW Mental Health Stakeholder Group on zoom only
Thursday 13th April	10am - 11am	Mid and East Mental Health Stakeholder Group on zoom only
Thursday 13th April	1pm - 2.30pm	West FoCUS on zoom only
Monday 17th April	10.30am - 12pm	Community Equipment Group in person at Millbrook Healthcare, Guildford and on zoom
Monday 17th April	1pm - 2pm	FoCUS reps meeting on zoom only
Thursday 20th April	10.30am - 12pm	Surrey Vision Action Group on zoom only

# EVENTS MAY

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Tuesday 9th May	12pm - 1pm	Long Term Neurological Conditions Group on zoom only
Tuesday 9th May	2.30pm - 4pm	FoCUS committee meeting on zoom only
Monday 15th May	6pm - 7.30pm	Surrey Wide DENS on zoom only
Thursday 18th May	10.30am - 12.30pm	SW DENS in person at Godalming Baptist Church and on zoom
Thursday 18th May	4.30pm - 5.30pm	Ethnic Minority Mental Health Stakeholder Group on zoom only
Monday 22nd May	10.30am - 12pm	East and North DENS on zoom
Wednesday 24th May	10am - 12pm	IMHN Confidence Training for Members in person (Venue TBC) and on zoom
Friday 26th May	1pm - 3pm	IMHN Coordinators Group on zoom only



We always love to hear from you!

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Get More Active project

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## Get in touch today!