



East Kent mencap

Spring Newsletter 2021

Vaccination special



We are



A message from our CEO

Welcome to the Easter edition of EKM's newsletter! The snow is a distant memory as we are starting to see sunnier days and the chance to meet up in small groups.

With the welcome news that people on the learning disability register are now a priority for a vaccine, we were very pleased to work with the NHS to set up a one day temporary vaccine centre at Foresters Hall in Ramsgate in March. We are incredibly grateful to KCHFT, our Chair, Amy Rutland, and the wonderful NHS staff who made this possible. It was also a pleasure to welcome the Mayor of Ramsgate, Councillor Raushan, back to Foresters Hall to meet some of the team. Raushan is a carer for her son and so was able to receive her vaccine on the day. This was a pilot so we're hopeful that it will lead to more dates in the next few weeks. Details about future dates will be posted on our website and social media.

I was fortunate to receive my first vaccine in February and am very relieved to know I am now partially protected. Apart from a sore arm and fatigue for 48 hours, it was quick and painless. With many members and their families having their vaccine, we feature some stories about their experiences and what it meant to them.

We know that, sadly, many people have lost close friends and family members to COVID and are coping with grief. I understand how difficult it can be to read about loss. However, we very much wanted to acknowledge those who died recently who were an important part of the history of our charity. On p8 we remember our friends Margaret and Ben Parish, Sue Smith, and Barry Cowley, and the contributions they made.

On a happier note, it is great to see our services starting to open up to more people. We are welcoming more members back to our Day Resources and planning lots of exciting activities for the summer. In the meantime, we have added some new virtual activities to our programme, which anyone can join for FREE. We can now also offer support for anyone who feels anxious about the restrictions lifting, including FREE taster sessions at all our Resource Centres. If you, or someone you know, would like to venture out again but has any concerns, do get in touch to see how we can help by emailing us at info@eastkentmencap.co.uk or calling us on 01843 808964.

Jason Gerlack
Chief Executive Officer at
East Kent Mencap



If you or someone you care for has a learning disability and needs support, please do get in touch. We are here to help.

01843 808 964

@EastKentMencap on Facebook

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

www.eastkentmencap.co.uk

Vaccinations in Ramsgate!

Here are some wonderful photos from our first vaccination day at Foresters Hall in Ramsgate.

On the right you can see our GOLD member Anne Marie being very brave as she is given her vaccination by the NHS nurse.

Below you can see our member John getting ready to have his jab.

And at the bottom of this page you can see Raushan, the Mayor of Ramsgate who is also a carer, getting her jab done.



Community Confidence Recovery

As the weather improves and the vaccination programme continues, the team at East Kent Mencap are here to support people with a learning disability to rebuild their confidence.

The pandemic has impacted on people's confidence. From April 2021, East Kent Mencap can offer the following support:

- Confidence building with accessing their local community
- Meeting up with friends
- Rejoining activities
- Attending Day Resource



The support we provide is person-centered, so we can support you in the way that suits you.

We can provide 1:1 support or group support, as well as Easy Read guidance on government rules and advice.

To find out more:

01843 808 964 info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

Laura gets her vaccine!

We are delighted to hear that so many of our members are getting the vaccine. You will be contacted by the NHS when it is your time to get vaccinated.

One of the first to get the vaccine at EKM was Laura, who is a member at our Herne Bay Day Resource. Laura lives in a shared house with her housemate and has been attending the Day Resource since June 2018. Herne Bay Day Resource Coordinator Louise McAlpine says she has a fantastic sense of humour, makes them laugh, and is always up for a chat and a gossip. Louise caught up with her to find out how she got on.

Laura said, 'my carer told me I could have the vaccine and arranged a date. Two nurses and a doctor came to my home and explained everything to me. Me and my housemate both had the vaccine. I was happy I had it, but my arm was a little bit achy, and I had a high temperature, and my body was aching for a couple of days. I think if you are offered the vaccine you should go for it. It is worth having as it will protect you from catching it, but you could still catch it, just not as bad.'

Laura says her favourite sessions are craft anything with glitter and sparkles! She also enjoys cooking and music and karaoke, and loves to sing! Laura loves to wear pink, purple, bright colours and lots of sparkles! When the nail shops are open - she gets long nail extensions pink and sparkly!

Louise said that 'Laura is very sociable and has lots of friends from the Day Resource and she also meets up with them outside of resource. We miss seeing Laura here at resource, but we get to see her on our virtual sessions which she attends most days. As more members are vaccinated, we look forward to welcoming them back!'

Your vaccination

You don't need to do anything to get the vaccine. You or your carer will be contacted by the NHS when it's your time to get vaccinated.

If you have any questions, do ask your support worker. They will be able to provide you with more information.



Vaccination Q&A with members

We asked some of our other members who have had the vaccination recently about what their experience was like. Thank you so much to the members who answered our questions!

Here is what they said:

1. How were you told about the vaccine?

Staff have been talking to us since before Christmas about the vaccine and what it is for. They showed us Easy Read information and we have listened to the news.

2. Did you have to book it?

No, someone from the NHS COVID Vaccine Centre rang our house to book it. Our GP had given them all our details.

3. Where did you go?

We went to St Peters Church Hall. Staff supported us to go.

4. How did you feel after?

It hurt a little bit at the time and arm ached for a while after.

No one had any other side effects.

5. Do you know anyone else who has had it?

Yes, all of us have had it and the staff that work here.

6. Would you tell others to have it?

Absolutely, if it is going to save people's lives.

Yes, if it means we can go back to the Day Centre and be able to see family and friends again.



If you have any questions about the vaccine, please do talk to a member of staff who will be able to get you some more information.

Check out this photo of our Fundraising Manager Jane just after she had her vaccine done! She is smiling under that mask!



Helping other people

Our member Louise wanted to help people in need, and so she decided to help a local food bank.

Louise says:

I wanted to do a food bank while I was over at my mum and dad's because I wanted to help the homeless people who haven't got a lot of food through this pandemic. I wanted to try and make a difference and brighten people's day as it's been a hard and difficult time and I wanted to think of others who are alone and who need food and to have a warm place to go home to.

Well done Louise, what an incredibly kind gesture to do!

Virtual Social Isolation Club

Join us every Thursday evening to have a chat, make friends and have fun!
All from the comfort of your own home.

Every Thursday from 4th March,
4 - 5pm on MS Teams, FREE for all

To join in, email
lauren.kay@eastkentmencap.co.uk



Making music!

A wonderful friendship has been made between two of our musical members during lockdown! Here are Shorne and Stephen's words.

Shorne's words: Through EKM's Facebook Lives I made friends with Stephen. We both enjoy music and having always played Djembes (drums) I heard Stephen on EKM's Talent Competition play the Glockenspiel. My Mum

bought me one in 2020 for my birthday. Stephen offered to teach me to play and he video called each week. Good fun lessons. We hope one day, when it is safe, that we could meet up at a Day Resource and play our Instruments together.

Stephen's words: Shorne and I both took part in East Kent Mencap's Got Talent. When Shorne heard the glockenspiel I played he really liked it. We made contact on Facebook whilst watching Demi's Facebook Lives. I offered to help him learn the instrument. His Mum told me that he was blind, so having limited vision myself, I came up with a different way to help him learn. I taught him the top row of notes first because they are in groups, and I thought he would be able to feel where the gaps were between the sets of notes. Instead of note names I gave each bar a number. This made it easier to understand. The first song we practiced together was " Campdown Races ". We have a practice session every week and Shorne is learning very quickly! We now play five songs together, with Shorne playing the melody and me harmonising. I am very happy with what we have achieved together as I never expected to be able to share my love of the glockenspiel and encourage someone else to love it too! I look forward to many more practices with my new friend.



Virtual Fitness Clubs

We now have free virtual fitness clubs in Herne Bay, Sheerness and Thanet for all our members to enjoy!

These clubs are held over MS Teams at the same time each week.

They include exercise, yoga, relaxation and interactive games!

To sign up, call 01843 808 964 or email info@eastkentmencap.co.uk

Supported by the National Lottery, Sport England and Kent Sport

KentSport
.org 



Sad news

Barry and Vanessa's story



We are sad to share that one of our members, Barry, has passed away from Covid. His brave wife, Vanessa, wants to share their story. They have been GOLD members for many years. Vanessa is a passionate campaigner for people with learning disabilities. In keeping with her character, even in this most difficult of times she is passionate about sharing her and Barry's story to encourage people to get vaccinated.

Vanessa's words: Why it is important people with learning disabilities have the Covid injection.

My husband Barry Cowley died on the 25th January 2021. We caught Covid on the 4th January. Within the week we was in hospital. Barry went to one Ward, I was on another, never saw Barry. Barry's breathing was getting worse, couldn't get his breath, then he was put into intensive care. He caught pneumonia and passed away. I miss him so much and wish he was here. Please please people get the Covid injection, will help save lives. I loss mine, together 28 years. BE SO SAFE WITH COVID 19. MAKE SURE WASH YOUR HANDS THOROUGHLY PLEASE. Love Vanessa xx

Ben and Margaret Parish

We were sad to hear that Ben and Margaret Parish have passed away from COVID. They were passionate about supporting those with learning disabilities. Their son, Paul, had Downs Syndrome and in supporting him they supported others too, and campaigned for EKM too. We are grateful to Ben and Margaret's daughters, Lyn and Mandy, for inviting donations to East Kent Mencap in their memory and send our condolences for their loss. Mandy is an EKM Trustee who brings such enthusiasm to EKM.



Sue Smith

Sadly, another good friend of EKM, Sue Smith, has also passed away from Covid. Sue was a Trustee for over 10 years. Sue worked in the caring field, always putting others before herself. She lived with her son Adrian, his wife Ann and their two girls. She will be sadly missed by her two sons, Jon and Adrian, her many close friends, and all who knew her.



Remembering loved ones

We know that many of you have lost close family and friends to Covid. We will be running a special feature in our next issue to commemorate them. If there is someone close you'd like to share a memory of, do send a couple of lines about them and a photo to funds@eastkentmencap.co.uk and we will aim to include everyone.

Thank you for supporting us!

Thank you to the following groups and individuals for their fantastic support:

- ◆ Our amazing Support Worker Tris who runs our virtual discos in his own time.
- ◆ Sue Baron for another beautiful quilt
- ◆ Family and friends who donated in memory of Margaret and Ben Parrish
- ◆ £500 from Councillor Mark Ellen
- ◆ Pfizer Research and Development Department for £1,000 towards virtual activities
- ◆ Leon for raising over £1,000—Read his story below!

Leon's lockdown challenge

Leon is the founder of L.U.M.B.A, which stands for Leon's Ultimate Mind & Body Activities. Leon reached out to us at the start of the year, as he was going to be setting himself the spectacular challenge of running the equivalent to TWO marathons while choosing our GOLD project within East Kent Mencap to be the beneficiaries of any sponsorship monies raised. 28 days, and 52.8 miles later... It's safe to say, Leon really went above and beyond and the outcome was nothing short of

incredible. Thrashing all of his targets, with more than £1000 raised, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank Leon for his amazing generosity and we look forward to a virtual catch up to hear all about your experience and learn more about the importance of mind and body wellness.

Thank you Leon!



Fun in the snow

Our member Maureen recently celebrated her 80th birthday! Happy Birthday, Maureen!

During the snow, our member Lee enjoyed making his own snowman. He had to be creative with decorating it! You can see his wonderful creation here.



On the Radio!

Jemma has just joined the GOLD team, and has been working with members to find new ways to amplify their voices. They were thrilled when Paul who runs Margate Radio said that he'd love to give GOLD a slot. They saw their chance to do something they'd never done before!

They feel lucky to be collaborating with Trevor Neal (of BBC Going Live! / Live and

Kicking fame) to make their pilot show. The group have been working together virtually. They are keen for there to be plenty of music (Thanet Island Discs presented by Paul Wood), and jingles and comedy (the 'Agony Gran' advice column, by Ben). There will also be features about issues which are important to members and the wider community. In episode one, Vanessa and Sarah will discuss the importance of being vaccinated against Covid-19 with a local expert.

They are excited about having our own show, watch this space for more details!

The GOLD members say:

We set up the radio show with Trevor so we can express what we want to the community. Trevor gives us good advice because he's got lots of experience. – Vanessa

I enjoyed talking to Trevor. He has good ideas and is a good listener. – Ben

Listen to our show to find out more about what is happening on the Isle of Thanet. - Kirk



Virtual Clubs and events!

Check out the awesome virtual clubs we have running currently! All these clubs are FREE and open to East Kent Mencap members. Your carers and family members are welcome to join you for these virtual clubs.

Virtual Social Isolation Club

Join this club to make new friends, have a chat, get some advice and have fun.

Every Thursday, 4—5pm on MS Teams

Email Lauren.Kay@eastkentmencap.co.uk to join in!

Virtual Fitness Club, Herne Bay

A fun friendly fitness club specially for people with a learning disability. All abilities welcome!

Every Thursday, 4—6pm on MS Teams

Email Louise.McAlpine@eastkentmencap.co.uk or Kelly.Forrest@eastkentmencap.co.uk

or call 07490 773593 to get involved!

Virtual Fit Start Club, Thanet

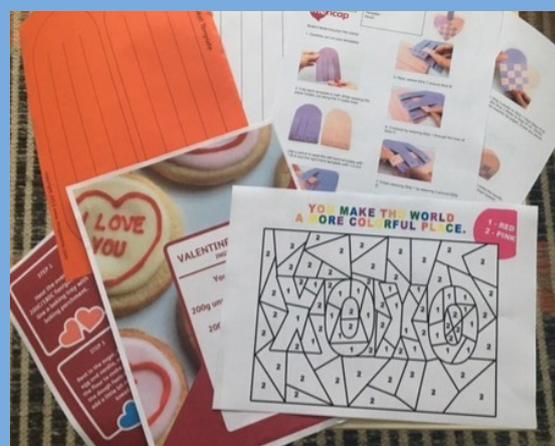
A fun friendly fitness club specially for people with a learning disability. All abilities welcome!

Starting soon on Wednesdays, 4.00—6.00 on MS Teams

Email William.Roberts@eastkentmencap.co.uk or call 01843 808 964 to sign up!

Keep an eye on our social media for upcoming events, including our legendary Virtual Discos!

Our amazing Support Worker Tris runs the EKM virtual discos in his own time. Members joined Tris and friends to boogie in their living room for Valentines Day and for an Easter Hop. The discos are free to join on TEAMS and everyone can also have a FREE goody bag with themed accessories and games. Look out for details of our next Disco on our website and social media. And thank you to Tris for being the coolest DJ!



Follow East Kent Mencap on social media to keep up to date with our services, virtual events and activities!

Search for [@EastKentMencap](https://www.instagram.com/EastKentMencap) on



Amy's pancake recipe

Our member Amy made this tasty pancake. She wanted to share the recipe with you so you can make your own to enjoy! Do ask a member of staff if you need help.

To make this pancake, you will need:

Toppings of your choice—Amy chose strawberries, banana, chocolate sauce and buttons.

120 grams plain flour

2 eggs

210ml milk

90ml water

1tsp vegetable oil

Pinch of salt

Method:

1. Put the flour in a bowl.
2. Make a hole in the flour and crack the egg into it.
3. Whisk the egg into the flour.
4. Add milk, water and salt.
5. Whisk it all together.
6. Put a little oil in a frying pan and warm it up. Be careful, it will get hot!
7. Poor in some of the mixture.
8. Slide a spatula underneath to stop the pancake sticking.
9. Flip it over if you can!
10. Once it's firm and cooked, place it on a plate and add your toppings!



Registered charity number: 1188118

Registered company number: 12263702

Find out more about our virtual events and services by getting in touch or visit our website

01843 808 964

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk