

# A SLICE OF PIE

**PIE is all about relationships....A Psychologically Informed Environment is a place or service that has been purposefully designed to support the mental, emotional, relational, learning and social needs of both service users and staff.**



## New beginnings at Daniel Gilbert House

I took my dog for a walk this weekend and noticed blue bells and crocuses coming up in the grass, and the apple blossom tree outside my flat was in bloom. The evening are getting lighter and (despite the rain) the weather is getting warmer.

Despite fears over the Indian Covid variant the vaccination programme is proceeding at pace and we may finally be seeing light at the end of the pandemic tunnel.

It feels like time to look to the future, consider what we have learnt over the past year, what we take forward, and how we can make the coming year a time of growth and new beginnings for everyone who lives and works in our services.

For many people this past year has felt quite isolating. For some people this is literally the case, those who have had to shield, and to a lesser extent those who have been working from home and missed the face-to-face interaction with colleagues.



For those in services it has been isolating in a different way. We have continued to come to work throughout to support and care for our service users, but the external services we relied on for additional support have not been there, either closed or working from home.

In addition there have been no internal groups or activities, no communal meals, no outings. At the height of the lockdown we felt like a little island and Brick Lane felt like a ghost town. But things are slowly returning to normal, professionals are returning to the services, the surrounding area feels populated again, and back to its usual lively diverse community and we are starting to plan the way out of the Covid restrictions.

We are looking to recruit volunteers, and student placements are starting again. We are planning the return of visitors and starting to discuss social activities.

For me the biggest thing that has come out of the pandemic is the sense of community, and the kindness shown by strangers. Local groups have formed all over the country to support the vulnerable, and to celebrate the work done by keyworkers (such as our frontline staff).

Hostels have benefited from generous donations to ensure our service users have what they need. Most of all staff and residents have worked together, and supported each other, to ensure that, despite the restrictions, people can still work towards a positive future where they can move beyond the barriers, trauma and stigma, and live happy, safe and fulfilled lives.

Whatever happens in the years to come I hope we can cherish and build on that sense of mutual support and kindness, and let that be the memorial to those that we have lost and everything this past year had cost us.

***Susan Smith***  
***Supported Housing Manager***



## THE Reading, Writing & ESOL Project

**Sarah Halsey is the Reading, Writing and ESOL Project Teacher for the project and Project Manager.**

**She has been running a pilot phase of the project till the end of June 2021 at Dellow, DGH and Crimscott St to support people experiencing homelessness to access literacy and English language support and improve their wellbeing, skills and access to further learning, training and employment opportunities.**

**Rachel Clayton, Interim Team Leader at Dellow interviewed Sarah for the PIE bulletin.**

### **Can you tell us a little about the project and what it does?**

- I offer flexible, accessible 1 to 1 reading and writing and English language support with a trauma informed approach.
- I aim to meet people where they are, and provide an alternative educational provision with the hope of offering people different ways to get involved.
- This project differs from your traditional educational provision with the level of flexibility it offers.

### **Can you tell me how you have incorporated a trauma informed approach to your practice?**

- Trauma can impact every part of a person's life, this includes how one learns, how they digest information and even their approach to learning.
- Generally awareness of trauma informs every part of my working style, for example providing a choice of how to take part, the options provided are through a phone



consultation, work that people can do independently, or through a zoom or WhatsApp call.

- Emphasis on consistency and reliability is also important as it helps to create a learning space where people feel safe and things feel familiar, this also helps with connecting and building relationships with the learners.

### **What challenges have you faced?**

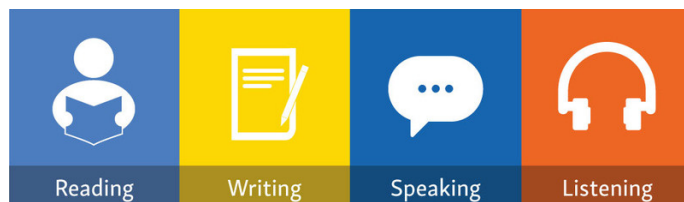
- Starting this project there were many challenges that I faced, from not being able to meet clients face to face, to lack of resources.
- Previously when working face to face I was able to gauge a lot through a person's appearance and body language, however without that I found that I learned to lean on other skills and put more focus on how a person sounded.
- I found that taking the time to have a chat before each session was helpful in combating this.
- I also found challenges within the lack of resources, as clients did not have smart phones or computers and most of what I was doing was telephone based.

## THE Reading, Writing & ESOL Project

- However with the help of the support staff team in creating accessibility to tablets and printing out resources it has helped to bring a smoother transition to this style of working.
- As time has gone on it has gotten easier and we have gotten into a rhythm. All things considered I have been pleasantly surprised at how committed people have been to engaging despite these barriers.

### How do you see this developing and what are your hopes for this project?

- I hope to secure long term funding for the project as I would like to continue to support people and offer different learning options.
- Currently I only provide 1-1 learning as I am aware that group work can be difficult; however I would like to offer some group work as I find there are many benefits, such as being able to connect with each other, learn from each other and socialise.
- I would also like to look into partnering up with a college and look into offering the learners the chance to get qualification.
- With this being said I never want this to become a project which focuses solely on qualifications as there are many other resources which offer that service, for me this project is about people that are not ready for that and would like to continue learning.



### Quote from client DB:

**"I like that the course is flexible and that Sarah understands that I have disabilities and works around them. When I need a break and find that I am overwhelmed she lets me have a break. Sarah is excellent, she has been there from day one and I can't fault her."**





## Grounded Ecotherapy and Mental Health Awareness week 10th-16th May



**Grounded Ecotherapy** is a horticultural therapy project, started by PRHA resident Paul Pulford. It was set up to help people struggling with poor mental health or substance misuse problems.

The main purpose of the project is to give volunteers a safe, non-judgmental environment where they can work with and around nature and help foster a feeling of mental and physical well-being.

The combination of exercise and encouragement to engage with others, which some volunteers may not have done for extended periods, helps reduce isolation and improves self-esteem and confidence. Several of Grounded volunteers have gone onto full time employment as a result of volunteering with us.

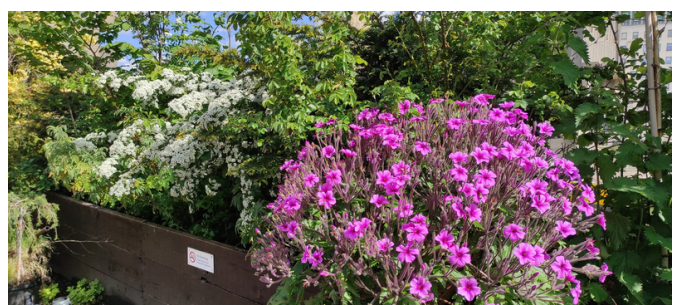
We currently are preparing for the opening of our flagship roof garden, on London's Southbank, after a year's forced hiatus because of the pandemic. Our team of staff and volunteers are hard at work to make the garden look the best it ever has.

You can see a sneak preview of what the project is about by clicking in the link below:

(Link to video on facebook page)

<https://bit.ly/3bnxX9m>

**Michael Richardson**  
**Communication Officer**



**Southbank rooftop garden**

## Wellbeing Wednesday

As part of our aim to support staff during these difficult times, we launched 'Wellbeing Wednesday' every week.

We are looking for ideas that you think would be beneficial to promote staff wellbeing in future sessions. If you know some already, do email me:

***[sMcPhillips@prha.net](mailto:sMcPhillips@prha.net)***

***Stewart McPhillips***  
***Business Development Manager***



***Pielink*** is a practice exchange network for homelessness/resettlement and others wishing to develop Psychologically Informed Environments –PIEs.

***PieLink*** aims to develop a community of knowledge and a community or practice; to provide information, inspiration, and a forum for discussion and exchange.

***Search: <http://pielink.net/> to view and join.***

More information can also be found on the G Drive under PRHA Referencing Folder:

***G:\PRHA Reference.***



**We are always looking for feedback, comments, suggestions, articles and photos for the Bulletin.**

**Please email:**

**Jaydee Anciro**

**Specialist Services Team Manager**

**with your contributions at:**

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