CALLING ALL NIGHT OWLS

Accessibility of pubs, bars and nightclubs in Surrey

Are you interested in helping us to find out the most accessible spots for a night out in Surrey and then sharing this info with others? One of our members would like to do some work in this area and we think it’s a great idea. We are looking for people who might like to join a project team to take this forward – please get in touch if you would like to find out more.

Photo description: a glitter ball twinkling away hanging from a ceiling

HAVE YOUR SAY ON TWO IMPORTANT CONSULTATIONS!

1 The consultation regarding the future of Epsom and St Helier hospitals has now opened. The programme is called Improving Healthcare Together and is proposing that a new emergency care hospital should be built with some existing services moved to this new facility including some maternity services and A & E (which would be replaced by Urgent Treatment Centres).

2 Surrey County Council are consulting on plans to close Surrey Disability Register. The consultation opens on Monday 27th January and will be open for 6 weeks. Read more and find out how to have your say on page 10.
Dear Coalition Member,

Welcome to edition 68 of Coalition News and our first edition of the new decade! For many of us January brings with it the prompt to make some New Year’s resolutions. A recent YouGov survey found the five most common resolutions to be: to get more exercise (47% of people), to lose some weight (44% of people), to improve my diet (41% of people), to save more money (31% of people) and to take up a new hobby (18% of people). Do these reflect your New Year’s resolutions or have you chosen something a little different? Almost 50% of resolutions are dropped by the first week of February – we’d love to hear how you are getting on with yours.

We have a busy few months ahead and hope to see you at one of our events, meetings or other activities, if you are not able to attend, do stay in touch – we love hearing from members about what matters to you.

Looking forward to seeing you all soon,

Clare

Clare Burgess

CAMPAIGNING UPDATE – NHS 111

In December, Coalition members, Sight for Surrey, Healthwatch Surrey and colleagues from other organisations in Surrey and London, went along to a meeting with the NHS England team at the Museum of London Docklands to discuss the NHS 111 service and its accessibility for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We heard about the existing contact options from the NHS digital team and other stakeholders and were then able to put the views of our members across emphasizing that SMS text as a contact option is essential. The outcome was the assurance from them that SMS text would be included in the new national specification and a commitment from the team to engage more consistently with deaf and hard of hearing people.

We have a follow-up meeting for this towards the end of January and will update you once we know how (and more importantly when) this change will come to life in Surrey.

Photo description: photo 1 - a view of a bridge in the distance with the river Thames shimmering underneath it with the grey sky in the background. Photo 2- Bob Hughes and Joe Collins from Sight for Surrey, sat inside with lots of people behind them, both smile at the camera.
Members continued to be out and about and having their voices heard throughout December and into January. There were meetings of groups including the Community Equipment Group, the DENs groups and two of the Special Interest Groups. We were also represented at the Improving Healthcare Together meeting early in January, at the Older Peoples Network meeting and many more.

DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK SURREY

The four DENS local area groups (South West, Mid, East and North) met during December for their last meeting of the year and discussed a broad range of issues which their members had raised.

Having outgrown their old venue, the East DENS group met at the fantastic YMCA East Surrey for the first time in December. The meeting was busy and included presentations from East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) and the Transport Hub followed by a discussion about accessibility in Surrey Libraries. The meeting finished with the opportunity to try out Table Cricket which was great fun.

The DENS groups next meet in March – please do take a look at our ‘what’s on’ page (page 11) for date, location and time details.

Is there a local issue that you would like to raise to discuss and tackle at a DENS meeting? If so, please get in touch with Yasmin Broome, her contact details can be found on page 6.

HARD OF HEARING FORUM

The December meeting saw the group discussing their experiences of accessing audiology services in Surrey and getting an update from providers of these services. The group heard a presentation from Diane Simms from the NatWest team on avoiding banking scams and were able to ask for clarity around accessibility options for banking. The group had an excellent update on Sight for Surrey’s hearing loss services and a case study was shared with the group. Sarah Ford gave us a commissioning update for Surrey County Council and discussed with the group their ideas for an approach to take in reviewing the specification of the sensory services contract over the course of the next year.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The Hard of Hearing Forum met during December. Surrey Vision Action group is meeting towards the end of January and the Long Term Neurological Condition Group will meet at the beginning of February (page 11 for details).
TAAT
The Talk about Assistive Tech group (TaAT) group met for the first time during December. It was particularly interesting to see the different interests of those who joined – from people looking for advice on an app for communication, to another looking for some ideas for using a Google home mini creatively. One of our Board members joined using his screen reader and the Zoom team helped us to iron out some issues by providing the keyboard shortcuts for that particular screen reader. The next TaAT group meeting is on Wednesday 19th Feb from 6.00pm – 7.00pm – it’s open to anyone who wants to talk about tech (devices or apps) and we meet using Zoom, a video conferencing package. Full instructions and training can be given! Please let us know if you would like to join and we will send you the instructions.

TECHNOLOGY

HAVE YOU TRIED OUR NEW ALEXA SKILL?
If you have an Amazon Echo device, you can now hear our weekly ‘what’s coming up’ update through your device. Before you use it for the first time you will need to enable the skill by clicking on this following link: http://tinyurl.com/sl6fc9j. Once you have enabled the skill, you then simply ask “Alexa, what’s my flash briefing” to get the schedule for the week ahead and to hear any key bits of news. If you’ve added other news channels to your flash briefing already then these may be played first (you can always skip these by saying “Alexa, skip”).

TECH TO COMMUNITY CONNECT

What is TECH TO COMMUNITY CONNECT?
This year will see the launch of two Tech to Community Connect projects:

1 Tech to Community Connect – East Surrey
In collaboration with Action for Carers Surrey, we have been successful in gaining Better Care Funding to investigate the use of technology in reducing loneliness and isolation for people in East Surrey who are carers or who have care and support needs. The project will see residents offered a ‘phablet’ (and the training and support to use it) to access a range of virtual groups and virtual activities. Recruitment will start shortly for our Project Manager for this 6-month pilot project.

2 Tech to Community Connect – Farnham and Aldershot
North East Hampshire and Farnham CCG kindly awarded us a small innovation grant to run a small pilot project in the Farnham and Aldershot areas. We will be working with a small group of disabled people who find it difficult to attend meetings and events in-person. As with the East Surrey project, we will be helping people learn how to use the technology to connect to community activities and our virtual groups.
Both projects will rely on a dedicated team of volunteer ‘Tech Angels’ to provide support and training in how to use a tablet to access a virtual group.
APP REVIEW

GOOGLE LIVE TRANSCRIBE

What is Google Live Transcribe?
This is a free application (an app) that automatically transcribes speech into text in near real time. You use your android phone or tablet to use it and you can download it from the play store.

The backstory
Google released Live Transcribe in February 2019. Google worked in close collaboration with Gallaudet University (known for hearing impairment research) to develop the app specifically for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It has been downloaded over 5 million times since then.

The technical bit – how does it work?
The app uses machine learning algorithms to turn audio into text. Google Live Transcribe uses Google Cloud Speech API. It works for over 70 languages and can switch between languages in the course of a single conversation!

Do I need a special account?
No, once downloaded, you can begin using it immediately though I would advise you downloading it in advance of needing it so you can have a practice and get the settings exactly as you would like them.

What about security?
The transcript is saved (for 3 days) to your device rather than the Cloud, though you can ask it not to save if you would prefer. You can’t edit the transcript and it doesn’t record the audio.

What was it like in different environments?
This app works amazingly well for a conversation between two people in a quiet environment. I tested this app in a range of environments – from a noisy coffee shop (where it did miss a few words) to a very quiet meeting room (where it was almost word perfect). I tested it using the microphone on my phone (this would be the default for most people – it would just happen automatically) and then I tried using an external microphone. The normal microphone on my middle-of-the-range android phone was perfectly adequate for a conversation between two people with my phone on the table in front of me. In a meeting environment, with more people and in a bigger room, an external microphone on a long cable plugged into my phone (and passed around the room) worked really well. I picked this external microphone up for under £7.00 on eBay and it folds up small enough to go into my bag!
Would you use it in day to day life?
Yes, absolutely. As someone who would usually particularly have difficulty in an environment like a coffee shop, this app will be incredibly useful for me.

Any drawbacks?
Yes, I wouldn’t try and use it in a room where everyone is speaking at once as you wouldn’t be able to tell from the screen who has said what.

Any other information?
I really like how you can customise the app – you can change the size and contrast of the text that you want to see which was useful. In one of the activities I went to, we connected my phone to the smart TV in the room (we casted it) to then put the transcript onto the screen so more than one person could follow it (we used the external microphone in this environment, plugged into my phone in the middle of the room). You can also ask it to detect background noise and put this into text e.g. *dog barking*, which did add a certain amount of fun to the conversations I had.

One thing that I did try (which Google by no means recommend it for I’m sure!) is using Google Live Transcribe to transcribe what someone on the phone is saying. It was fiddly but it worked and I will certainly use this again. The way I did this was I asked someone to call my mobile phone, I answered the call and put it on speakerphone, then I minimised the call (but kept it open) and opened the Live Transcribe app. Then I said “start talking” to my caller and off we went! It meant I had to hold the phone in front of my face so I could read the transcription which did mean that anyone walking past would have been able to hear my call but for non-private calls I will use it again.

In our next edition: Coming up next time we have a review of the new Amazon Echo buds. If you have a review to share (or a request to road-test a particular device or app) then please do let us know.
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

We were delighted to attend the Active Surrey summit early in January, which focused on Mental Health and Physical Activity, and involved providers from across the county coming together to hear best practice in how to involve people experiencing mental ill-health. **We are keen to include a review of a physical activity opportunity in Surrey from the perspective of someone with mental ill-health** in our next edition, if you might be willing to help us out please get in touch.

Hannah Deakin recently produced a fantastic blog post on her experience of swimming, we have included an extract below but very much recommend you go and read her whole blog post using this link: [http://tinyurl.com/sf2473j](http://tinyurl.com/sf2473j)

Blog extract

*Have you thought of swimming? I think it is a great form of exercise suitable for all. Young, old, able bodied and disabled. I love swimming. I am free in the water and can move around at ease. On land, I am restricted to my bed or wheelchair, and moving around is so hard. Whereas in the water it is completely different. I can move! I am like a fish!*

*I go to the **Dolphins at Woking** pool in the park, once a week. They run sessions on a Tuesday lunchtime and Friday evening. It is a session for disabled people, so you don't get looks from other people as everyone is accepting. I like going to Woking as they have a Lagoon pool. The water is warmer, so I don't spasm as much when I get in and it is a sloped entry, so you can be wheeled in on a shower chair rather than hoisted. Furthermore, if someone can walk but not do steps, then they can walk in.*

*I go swimming with my Mum and PA. Initially, when I am wheeled into the water and then floated off the shower chair, I spasm a bit, especially if it is colder water. It takes me a few minutes to adapt to it. Then we try and relax my body, stretch me out and loosen me up. On land it is hard to stretch as much. Then I do some exercises, followed by swimming, standing practice and trying to take a few steps, supported by my Mum and PA. I find I feel less stiff, it helps a bit with pain, as well as improving my fitness and enabling me to progress with my physiotherapy. It is also enjoyable, which is important! I have got quite good at swimming now. My Mum struggles to keep up with me! Often, people are quite shocked when I start swimming, after seeing me struggling to get in the pool in the hoist or shower chair and then doing my exercises. I am a water baby.*

*Dolphins swim club runs sessions in Woking, Guildford and Tandridge. Please search for sessions using the activity finder, or by asking one of the team to do this for you.*
MENTAL HEALTH

ANIMAL THERAPIES AND PETS

Animal assisted therapies and pets as therapy have both been around for some time but are gaining popularity. **Do you have an experience to share with our members** – either in engaging in a formal animal assisted therapy or in the positive impact to your mental health that pet ownership has had? Please get in touch as we would love to share your case study.

Following some of us recently experiencing the loss of a pet or assistance animal, this edition we are highlighting a few sources of help and support for anyone experiencing an animal bereavement.

Grieving an animal can be similar to mourning the loss of any other family member. Some people report experiencing feelings of deep loneliness and isolation and these feelings are often even stronger for people who are disabled who may have relied on their animal for companionship as well as practical assistance.

**The Blue Cross offer a pet bereavement service**, providing free support to anyone affected by losing a pet. They can be contacted by phone 0800 096 6606 or by email: pbssmail@bluecross.org.uk

**Cats Protection offer a service called Paws to Listen grief support service.** You can contact them on 0800 024 9494 or online via their contact form here http://tinyurl.com/ta8zpfs

*We apologise that we have not been able to include an SMS text number for either of the above options, we have requested this and explained why it is so important.*

Other sources of help and support

**Give us a shout** – a 24/7 SMS text service free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime and anywhere. Text the service on 85258.

**Samaritans** – phone free at any time 116 123 or by email jo@samaritans.org

**Surrey and Borders NHS Partnership Trust (SABP) Crisis Mental Health Helpline** – open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year - call 0800 915 4644 or by SMS text to 07717 989 024.

**If you are able to travel, you could also consider visiting a Safe Haven**

There are Safe Havens in Epsom, Guildford, Redhill, Aldershot and Woking available every day. Opening times vary but they are all open 7 days per week, you can find full details here http://tinyurl.com/razw6m3, or by phoning or calling the SABP Crisis line above if you do not have internet access.
FUNDRAISING UPDATE

We were successful in our collaborative bid for Better Care Funding with Action for Carers Surrey to fund a 6-month pilot project for the East Surrey area. Please see page 4 for details.

We have just submitted a bid to the Community Foundation for Surrey for a strategic IT project – fingers crossed please and we will be able to let you know in April if we have been successful.

CONSULTATIONS OPEN

Improving Healthcare Together

The consultation on the future of Epsom and St Helier hospitals had just been launched. The consultation is regarding the building of a new specialist emergency care hospital with the transfer of some services currently housed at Epsom and St Helier to this new facility wherever that should be (at Epsom, St Helier or Sutton Hospital). The programme is known as Improving Healthcare Together, the public consultation is open for 12 weeks (until 1st April 2020). The consultation proposes three potential options for the location of a new specialist emergency care hospital – on the Epsom, St Helier or Sutton hospital sites. Sutton was agreed by the local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) as a preferred option, but health leaders are clear that all three options can be delivered and will be consulted on.

Please take the time to familiarise yourself with the proposals and do respond to the consultation in whichever way is easiest for you:

A copy of the questionnaire, the summary and full consultation documents and more detail about events and consultation activity can all be found on the website at https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/consultation/.

You are also invited to attend one of the listening events listed below:

- 11th February 2020 6.30pm – 8.30pm at Epsom Downs Racecourse, Epsom Downs, Epsom KT18 5LQ
- 17th March 6.30pm to 8.30pm at Bookham Community Association 51 Church Rd, Great Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3PQ

VOLUNTEER VACANCIES

Surrey Coalition are currently looking for the below volunteers.

1. Vice Chair for the Mid Surrey Disability Empowerment Network
2. Event volunteers (to help us to ‘man’ our stalls at events around the county)
3. ‘Tech Angel’ volunteers in East Surrey, Farnham and Aldershot
CONSULTATIONS OPEN

The website also lists the following mobile pop-up events happening in our area:
- 01/02/2020 10.00am – 1.00pm at ASDA Burgh Heath
- 06/02/2020 9.30am – 2.30pm at Leatherhead Market
- 07/02/2020 1.30pm – 4.00pm Dorking High Street
- 15/02/2020 2.00pm – 4.30pm Bourne Hall, Ewell
- 07/03/2020 2.00pm – 4.00pm Sainsbury’s Kiln Lane, Epsom

The consultation documents can be accessed here https://improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk/consultation/key-documents/ or by emailing hello@improvinghealthcaretogether.org.uk or by SMS text on 07500 063191.

Surrey Disability Register
If you are on Surrey Disability Register, you should be contacted to be asked to respond to a consultation regarding the proposal to close the register. At the time of us writing, the consultation is due to launch on Monday 27th January and to run for 6 weeks. Please do take the time to respond and have your voice heard. The Coalition will be submitting a response outlining the reasons that we believe the register should not be closed.

Give your views on possible changes to NHS walk-in services in North West Surrey
Local doctors and healthcare professionals are asking for feedback on proposals to change and develop urgent care and walk-in services in North West Surrey. Residents are invited to attend a public event to give their views on a shortlist of options for future services.

NHS North West Surrey Clinical Commissioning Group, alongside our partner organisations that make up North West Surrey Integrated Care Partnership, have been reviewing out of hospital services as part of The Big Picture programme. This looks at how to address the pressure on healthcare services from a growing and aging population, the changing needs of people with long term conditions like diabetes and heart disease and the challenge of recruiting the right healthcare staff.

Public feedback will be used to shape the clinical model for urgent care services and to reach a preferred option or options. If that leads to a substantial change to any services that are currently provided, a full public consultation would take place before any final decisions are made.

An engagement event is planned for Wednesday 5th February from 10.00am to 12.00 noon at the Hythe Centre in Staines. If you cannot attend an event but want to share your views – get in touch using the details below. Please use the details below to book a place if you are able to go.

Email nwsccg.bigpictureprogramme@nhs.net, Call 01372 232450
SMS Text 07880 091328
# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

## FEBRUARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Name of meeting or group</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/02/2020</td>
<td>Long Term Neurological Conditions Group (LTNC)</td>
<td>10.30am – 1.00pm</td>
<td>Park House, Leatherhead</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/02/2020</td>
<td>Independent Mental Health Network reps huddle</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>Astolat, Burpham</td>
<td>Guy Hill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/02/2020</td>
<td>Talk about Assistive Tech (TaAT)</td>
<td>6.00pm – 7.00pm</td>
<td>Virtual</td>
<td>Clare</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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## MARCH

<table>
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<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Contact person</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>02/03/2020</td>
<td>North Disability Empowerment Network Surrey group (DENS)</td>
<td>10.30am – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Addlestone Community Centre</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02/03/2020</td>
<td>East and Mid FoCUS</td>
<td>12.30pm – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Holly Trinity Church, Redhill</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/2020</td>
<td>Disability Empowerment Network Surrey Chairs group</td>
<td>10.30am – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Park House, Leatherhead</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>04/03/2020</td>
<td>South West FoCUS</td>
<td>12.30pm – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Godalming Baptist Church</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>09/03/2020</td>
<td>North West FoCUS</td>
<td>10.30am – 1.30pm</td>
<td>Hythe Centre</td>
<td>Jane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/03/2020</td>
<td>South West Disability Empowerment Network Surrey (DENS)</td>
<td>10.30am – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Godalming Baptist Church</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/03/2020</td>
<td>West FoCUS</td>
<td>12.30pm – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Aldershot Centre for Health</td>
<td>Jane</td>
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<td>16/03/2020</td>
<td>East Disability Empowerment Network Surrey (DENS)</td>
<td>11am – 1pm</td>
<td>YMCA East Surrey</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18/03/2020</td>
<td>Surrey Coalition Board Meeting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Clare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/03/2020</td>
<td>Hard of Hearing Forum</td>
<td>10.30am – 2.30pm</td>
<td>Park House, Leatherhead</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/03/2020</td>
<td>IMHN Coordinating Group meeting</td>
<td>10.30am – 1.30pm</td>
<td>Park House, Leatherhead</td>
<td>Guy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23/03/2020</td>
<td>Mid Disability Empowerment Network Surrey (DENS)</td>
<td>10.30am – 12.30</td>
<td>Park House, Leatherhead</td>
<td>Yasmin</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you are coming along for the first time, please get in touch with the relevant contact person to let them know.

Please remember:

1. **Bring your own re-usable cup** (or a mug!) to meetings if you can
2. If you are emailed or sent papers in advance, please could you bring these to the meeting with you – **paper copies won’t always be available**

Joining remotely: You can join many of our meetings by video call or phone – please just give us some notice. **How to contact us:** Please see page 6 for details.
Let us lead you in the right direction...

With over 20 years of experience within direct payments, David Howard Payroll offers a cost effective, simple yet comprehensive service that includes payroll, managed account and invoice only options.

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