



— Winter Issue 2026 —

# TCF Newsletter

Be Connected, Be Informed, Be Well.



## THIS MONTH'S ISSUE FEATURES



Bristol Royal Hospital For Children



listening to individuals

healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset

onecare



CHS healthcare Part of Acacium Group

SARSAS Listen. Believe. Support.



VASSALL COMMUNITY HUB



## Welcome to our Newsletter

As the days begin to lengthen and spring comes into sight, we're pleased to share our Winter Newsletter with you.

Inside, you'll find opportunities to connect and support your wellbeing — from Talk Club in Fishponds and woodland wellbeing sessions, to cooking classes and end-of-life planning workshops. We're highlighting powerful community voices through Changing Futures, the digital launch of Unique's Little Red Book, and engagement work shaping local maternity and health services.

You'll also find updates from across the network, practical care and support information, and community gatherings like Soup and Social at Vassall Community Hub.

# Announcements



**Healthwatch Bath and North East Somerset** are carrying out research into the hospital experiences of people who use a language other than English or who find communication more difficult.

If you've recently spent time in hospital in the B&NES area, please complete our survey. Your feedback will help improve local hospital services.

[www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AT15WS/](https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/AT15WS/)



Our **Resettlement Team** has had a busy start to the year. ESOL lessons began at our Yate hub, welcoming people from Ukrainian, Vietnamese, Afghan and Iranian communities.

They also hosted a dumpling-making workshop, producing 600 dumplings, and celebrated Lunar New Year with local communities in Yate, marking the Year of the Horse together.



We're working with the **Somerset, Wiltshire, Avon and Gloucestershire (SWAG) Cancer Alliance** to understand people's experiences of cancer services, including screening.

Your feedback will help identify barriers and improve local services. Complete the survey:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CancerScreeningCare>

## Talk and Meditate in Fishponds

Come along to **Talk and Meditate** in Fishponds running fortnightly on a Wednesday evening (check website for [details](#)) – a welcoming, confidential **space for men to speak openly about how they're feeling**, both the good and the bad, without fear of judgement.

This group is about **connection, honesty, and support**. Life can be challenging, and too often men feel they have to carry things alone. Here, you're invited to share as much or as little as you like, to listen, and to be heard. **There's no pressure to "fix" anything – just space to be real.**

Each session combines open conversation with a **short, gentle meditation** to help ground the body and calm the mind. The meditation is simple and accessible, and no previous meditation experience is necessary.

Whether you're feeling stressed, stuck, curious, or simply want to connect with other men in a meaningful way, you are welcome. **Come as you are – this is your space to pause, breathe, and talk**



For more information feel free to reach out [jamestalkclub@gmail.com](mailto:jamestalkclub@gmail.com)

# Changing Futures

## Voices in Action: Challenging Health Inequity Together

Being part of the **Changing Futures Bristol coproduction team** has been transformative for me, both personally and professionally. The programme aims to **influence system change to better support people who experience co-occurring disadvantages** such as homelessness, contact with the criminal justice system, domestic abuse, substance use, mental ill health and poverty.

In April last year we launched **Bristol Community Voice** to connect people across our city, enable coproduction initiatives and amplify lived experience voices **to help shape better support for some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities**. We know from people sharing their realities with us, alongside stark research statistics, that **experiences of Multiple Disadvantage and health inequity are inextricably linked**. Research from the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) highlights this connection clearly.

As a result, **we hosted a collaborative event** in November at Trinity Centre, inspired by The King's Fund call to action for **“a radical shift in the public sector from ‘doing to’ to ‘doing with’”**. The event celebrated **how lived experience voices and innovative practice can help address health inequity**, featuring guest speakers, performance, art, poetry and workshops.

*“The most inspiring thing about the artwork is being able to see where people are finding their voices, re-framing their experiences and beginning to find their power.”*

The event was coproduced and **welcomed 130 attendees**, including lived experience experts and staff from primary care, the voluntary sector, government and grassroots organisations.

‘Leaves of Action’ commitments included: **“Listen – learn – act – change”**, **“Walk the walk, talk the talk, use eyes and ears”** and **“Create a coproduction strategy”**.

### Participant reflections included:

- *“I didn’t expect as many services or as much lived experience involvement.”*
- *“I have a lifetime of experience as a service user... It’s inspiring and humbling to use this to help shape services.”*

Thanks for all who were involved in contributing to the event and let’s do more do with!



## Cerebral Palsy Plus Cooking Class

We've had another busy year at **Cerebral Palsy Plus** with a focus on facilitating events and activities in North Somerset for our members there. As ever, we continue to support our members to achieve their goals as well as create **opportunities for connection, fun and personal development**. So, when at the end of 2024, Tom, age 32 from Clevedon said he'd love to learn to cook with the hopes of becoming a chef, we decided to help make that dream happen.



We teamed up with **Sarah and Clare, who are Travelling Kitchen**. A social enterprise whose goal is to promote a better awareness of the food we eat and to **teach essential cooking skills in an accessible way**. We partnered with Portishead Youth Community Centre, a welcoming space with a purpose-built accessible kitchen and dining room who were happy to host us.

In 2025 we held **4 classes for our adult members and 1 for our child members**, taking any culinary requests and providing accessible transport for those who required it. We've had so much fun and learnt to cook a variety of meals from lasagna to sushi and we are so excited to be providing more classes this year.

**If you are interested in Cerebral Palsy Plus membership, you can call us on: 01179 655 028 or email: [office@cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk](mailto:office@cerebralpalsyplus.org.uk).**

## Death Doula's End of Life Planning Workshop in Bristol

Talking about death is not easy. Nor is understanding the complexity around getting your affairs in order, but both are important to do whilst you and those close to you still have time and capacity.

Ruby and Claire's End of Life Planning workshop is a **practical workshop** to help you understand your options, document your wishes, and feel confident opening the conversation with your people.

**This workshop is for anyone contemplating their own mortality and wanting to get clear on their end of life options and wishes.** This workshop will focus on both practical information and personal inspiration. We will invite you to consider what will truly matter at the end of your life so that you can embrace life while you are still living.

**Date and time:** Saturday **March 7th, 9:30AM - 12:30PM**

**Location:** Mazi Project, St Catherines Trading Estate, Whitehouse Ln, Bedminster, Bristol BS3 4DJ

**Tickets and more information on [Headfirst here](#).**



# Spotlight on... Woodland Wellbeing



## Forest of Avon

The **Forest of Avon** facilitates **woodland wellbeing projects** for people who face barriers to accessing nature.

We run **groups for people living with dementia and their carers**, two in Bristol in partnership with the Bristol Dementia Wellbeing Service and one in S. Gloucestershire. We run **a group for people living with long term mental health needs** in partnership with Second Step; and **a group for people who have had a severe cardiac event**, in partnership with NHS University Hospitals.

We use **publicly accessible parks** so that people can build a connection and with a greenspace they could visit independently. We spend time together in nature, enjoying the seasons, **going for walks, cooking on a fire and making nature-based crafts**.

We have made bird feeders, ink and dyes from plants, cyanotypes, plaster casts and sun catchers. We enjoy using natural materials and being inspired by our sites and the time of year.

In February **we had an exhibition of our work in Sparks in Broadmead**. The groups all made something to be part of the show, and we had a lots of information about what we do and how you could do things at home to connect to nature.



## Tortworth Forest Centre - Hawthorn Project

**Tortworth FOREST CENTRE**

**Nature-based wellbeing group with free mini bus from Bristol to Tortworth**

**The Hawthorn Project**  
Wellbeing sessions for self identifying women  
Wednesdays 11-2.30 pm

*"My anxiety gets better in the woods, which boosts my mood."*  
*"The woods grounds me and gives me space to think straight"*

Do you enjoy spending time in nature and connecting with others? The Hawthorn Project is for women who struggle with their mental health who are looking for a supportive space to escape to. The woodland based group improves resilience and overall wellbeing using nature connection, bushcraft activities and the opportunity to eat a nutritious meal around the fire.

tortwortharboretum.org/our-projects  
referrals@tortwortharboretum.org  
07719 317 170

**NRS** **South Gloucestershire Council** **COMMUNITY FUND** **woodlands.co.uk**

We currently have **spaces available in the Hawthorn Project**, a wellbeing group for self-identifying women aged 18+ experiencing mental health challenges, including recovery from drug and alcohol use. Sessions run on Wednesdays during term time, with a **free minibus** from Central Bristol (10:30am–3pm).

The group focuses on **connecting with nature** through grounding exercises, gentle woodland walks, learning new skills, and sharing a meal around the fire.

The Hawthorn Project is a rolling programme, and participants are asked to attend consistently. Participants must be able to spend 4 hours outdoors and attend independently.

**Self-referrals and professional referrals are welcome.** If you're supporting someone who may be interested, please discuss it with them and complete the referral form (see attached flyer).

Sessions take place at **Tortworth Forest Centre**, a beautiful arboretum in South Gloucestershire, around **25 minutes north of Bristol**.

# Autumn Years Community Care Celebration of the Year



As we reflect on the past year at **Autumn Years**, there is much to celebrate. It has been a year defined by **growth, compassion, and a deepened commitment to the people who make our community so special.** In May we opened a **new Day Centre at Hartcliffe City Farm** which has become very popular and extends the number of Autumn Years Respite Day Centre to five with **Centres at Lawrence Weston, Stoke Gifford, Hartcliffe, Yate and Thornbury.**

One of our proudest achievements has been the continued development of our person-centred care approach. Through individual wellbeing plans, enhanced activity programmes, and stronger family involvement, **our clients have enjoyed greater choice, independence, and meaningful daily experiences.**

Our calendar has been filled with **vibrant events** from themed afternoons and seasonal celebrations to live music and intergenerational activities, each bringing laughter, connection, and purpose into everyday life.

We have also **invested in our team**, recognising that outstanding care begins with supported and valued staff.

Importantly, we have **deepened our links with local health professionals and community organisations**, helping us deliver more responsive and holistic care. These partnerships ensure residents receive timely support while remaining connected to the wider community.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, the trust of families, and the voices of our residents.

**Together, we have made Autumn Years not just a place of care, but a place of belonging and we look forward to building on this success in the year ahead.**





Helping you find the right care, when it matters most.

At **CHS**, we know arranging care can be emotional and overwhelming, whether it's for you or a loved one. That's why we're here: to **simplify the process, listen to your needs, and offer trusted expert guidance every step of the way - at no cost to you..**

We don't simply offer care options; **we thoughtfully match you with the right providers tailored to your individual needs, preferences, and circumstances.** With over 30 years' experience and a network of 4,000+ rigorously vetted, CQC-accredited care homes and home care agencies, you can be confident your loved one is in safe hands.

Whether you're exploring the idea of receiving care at home or facing the decision to move into a care home, we are **here to guide you with empathy and expertise.** We take the time to truly listen and understand your unique situation.

**Start your care journey with confidence.** From your very first phone call, we'll take you through the process with care, understanding and expert advice. You stay in control, we're simply here to support, guide and reassure you along the way. Get in touch today

## **SARSAS - Free Monthly Support for Survivors in Bristol**

SARSAS warmly invites anyone who has experienced sexual violence, at any point in their life, to join our **free monthly support sessions.** These take place at the **Wellspring Settlement** in Barton Hill on the **second-to-last Tuesday of each month, from 11am to 1pm.** Our specialist support workers provide a safe, welcoming space where you can take things at your own pace and feel supported without pressure.

There is **no need to book** – you can simply drop in when it suits you. Attendance is **completely free**, and there is **no expectation to talk about your experience** unless you choose to. You are welcome to pick up information about SARSAS services or speak quietly with our team about the support options available, including helplines and counselling.



Each session also includes **optional calming, self-care activities**, such as decorating tote bags or painting plant pots, designed to be grounding and relaxing. Our team can also share **gentle coping techniques** to use in everyday life.

You decide how much or how little to take part – whether you stay for five minutes or the full session. Find out more about what's involved, including location and **upcoming dates, [here](#).**

**We look forward to welcoming you with warmth, understanding, and kindness.**

# Unique Little Red Book

**Unique** was founded when five families affected by rare chromosome disorders came together to share their stories. Each family contributed to a **Little Red Book**, physically passing it along to the next to build a **shared narrative of hope, resilience, and connection**.

In 2025, 40 years after our first Little Red Book, we've worked with our incredible members to **create a brand-new digital version of the Little Red Book**. Launched on Rare Chromosome and Gene Disorder Awareness Day 2025, the book is filled with real-life stories and personal experiences from people around the world living with rare chromosome and gene disorders.

No two stories are the same. With the help of our global community, **we've gathered powerful insights into life with rare chromosome and gene disorders**. Explore the Little Red Book and discover the strength, courage, and uniqueness of our members' experiences.

**Unique supports families affected by rare chromosome disorders**. If you, or someone you know could benefit from Unique's support, you can **join their membership for free on their website**.

**We are Unique... and so are you.**



## Vassall Community Hub



## Soup and Social Returns to the Vassall Community Hub

**Soup and Social is back at the Vassall Community Hub in Fishponds**, bringing local people together in a warm, friendly space. Run by **Bristol Charities in partnership with Life Church Bristol**, the sessions are open to everyone in the neighbourhood –whether you're popping in for a chat, a hot drink, or to meet new people.

This year, visitors can enjoy a **free cup of soup, free toasties, and unlimited hot drinks**, all served by Vassall Community Hub staff and volunteers, alongside volunteers from Life Church Bristol.

**Soup and Social also offers access to practical support**. Housing Matters joins every second Thursday of the month, providing free, confidential, one-to-one housing advice. Bristol Charities is also offering free window vacuums, humidity monitors, and dehumidifiers for low-income BS16 residents struggling with damp, plus access to free tumble-dryer sessions.

Hub Manager Zoe Williams says:

**"Soup and Social is about making everyone feel welcome. It's a simple way to connect with others and be part of the community."**

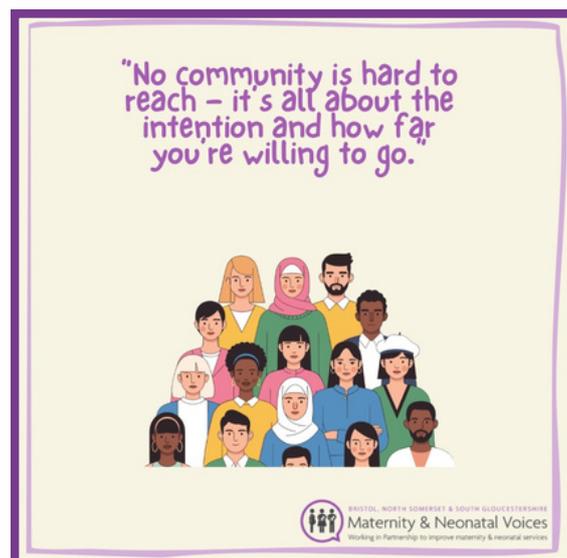
Everyone is welcome - come along for the food, stay for the conversation.

## Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership

Over the past year, the **Maternity and Neonatal Voices Partnership (MNVP)** has carried out **wide-ranging engagement** to ensure that the voices of women, birthing people, and families are reflected in the development of maternity and neonatal services. This work has focused on reaching those who may face additional barriers to being heard, using **trusted, inclusive, and trauma-informed approaches**.

MNVP has engaged with people whose experiences are shaped by factors such as language barriers, discrimination, insecure immigration status, involvement with the criminal justice system, and social exclusion. This has included listening to the experiences of Roma communities, refugees and people seeking asylum, LGBT+ individuals, and women in secure settings. These conversations have provided **valuable insight into access to care, communication, safety, and dignity throughout pregnancy, birth, and the postnatal period**.

The learning gathered through this engagement has **strengthened the evidence shared with service providers and commissioners, helping to highlight gaps, identify good practice, and support service improvement**. By centring lived experience and inclusion, MNVP continues to play a vital role in shaping more equitable and responsive maternity and neonatal care.



## Healthwatch BNSSG



**Healthwatch Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire** have been busy engaging with communities across the area, listening to residents and **gathering valuable feedback about local health and care services**. Recent events highlighted just how important it is to hear directly from people about their experiences, what works well and where improvements are needed.



We were pleased to attend a range of community events, including **New Monday at The Galleries**, organised by Bristol City Council & Skills Connect and the **Vassall Community Hub's Health and Wellness Day**, both of which provided welcoming spaces for meaningful conversations. **Well Aware and TCF** were also in attendance, helping residents access **information, advice and support**.

These events offer vital opportunities for communities to connect with organisations, ask questions and share lived experiences that help shape future services.

We're delighted to announce the launch of **our new Children's Resources Hub** – a dedicated, trusted space **designed to support children's health and wellbeing and the people who care for them.**

The hub brings together **high-quality information** covering a wide range of topics, including early years development, neurodiversity, mental health, food and eating, and parental support. **Developed in partnership with Bristol Children's Hospital**, these resources are **designed to help families, carers and professionals find the right support at the right time.**



 **Explore the Children's Resources Hub**

**here: <https://www.wellaware.org.uk/childrens-hospital-resource.../>**



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**sign up here!**



**You can also email us: [info@wellaware.org.uk](mailto:info@wellaware.org.uk) for more information.**