

Taking Part



Annual Report 2020-2021



Wellbeing
Independence Partnership
Telford and Wrekin



Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits

NHS
Shropshire
Clinical Commissioning Group
Telford and Wrekin
Clinical Commissioning Group

Shropshire Council
Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



Only one thing to do....



KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON



Our 2020
AGM

...And
do it online!



Taking Part

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Trustee Report:



Welcome to the Taking Part Annual Report 2020 2021 and a chance to chat over the past year.

Well it's certainly been a year of learning new skills – how to unmute Zoom for instance. And in my case come to terms with the fact that the grey old man peering out of the screen is me.

It's a huge understatement to say it's been a challenging time. The spectre of Covid has, I think, touched us all to a greater or lesser extent, sometimes in tragic ways and sometimes in just plain frustrating ways. On a personal level we have lost family members and struggled to see our son living abroad.



On the positive side this period of time allowed us all to reconnect with what's important to us as individuals and as part of our peer groups. Good examples perhaps being the huge number of ad hoc groups which were set up to watch out for neighbours, do a group veg run, combat loneliness, ensure each other's mental health etc. This is where Taking Part came into its own, continuing to deliver under difficult circumstances, demonstrating an ability to adapt and demonstrate our value to our communities in all areas.

There are others who can speak on this with more authority than me so I will leave it to them.

I must just make a special mention of our volunteers and Experts by Experience who have all contributed mightily. Without them this would have all been so much harder.

*Thank you!
Volunteers!*

Trustee Report.



As Trustees John and Sue, myself and our two newest members, Jean Harris and Paul Hume Miller, have kept the wellbeing of the team front and centre in our actions and were aware that some were perhaps feeling a bit remote (not exclusive to Taking Part). We were really pleased to meet the team in a relaxed environment where we could see for our own eyes the fact that the team are up for the challenge and ready to go again.



We are delighted to welcome aboard Paul Hume Miller, a busy man with very current business experience who wants to bring those skills and others to the table to play his part in ensuring our charity continues to move forward in a positive, cost effective and relevant manner.



As you will hear elsewhere Taking Part have had a successful year financially so we are in a strong position going forward. We have also gained new opportunities and forged new relationships



Speaking of going forward one aspect that has necessarily been put on hold is the staff and volunteers ongoing personal and professional development programmes. I am sure these will be back on course asap and the Trustees look forward to contributing whatever we can whenever we can.



So to conclude, I believe Taking Part is emerging from this reporting year leaner, fitter and well able to handle whatever the future throws at us. Enjoy the rest of our Annual Report.

Shropshire Work:

Advice, Advocacy and Welfare Benefits



The Independent Advocacy team rose to the challenge of the pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns and were able to continue to work throughout, adapting their working style according to restrictions, taking into account the needs of the clients, and upskilled to make best use of current technology, often also supporting clients to do the same, so that they could continue to offer a high level of support to their clients.

The team found that due to so many services not running, the support they offered to their clients often became more complex, that issues were not able to be resolved in the usual manner or in a timely fashion. They were able to support clients through this and to help them to understand the situation, manage their expectations and to get creative when finding solutions.



People supported with Advocacy

594



Advocacy interventions

8383



Staff hours on client work

8977



2068

Volunteers hours

In September 2020 we were awarded another Advocacy QPM, and were delighted, though it was a lot of hard work from Taking Part's team, it is a great achievement.

A sign of quality advocacy, that we are very proud of.



A huge team effort!



Shropshire Work-Good Things!

Making staying at home more fun!

Taking Part and Qube teamed up with Shropshire Council to create imaginative, fun and creative activities for people who would normally attend Day Care Services to do at home during lockdown and beyond!

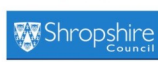


We started with Alana's great Picasso's Portraits!



Good things to do at home

www.qube-oca.org.uk/goodthings | Facebook: Good things to do at home



Good Things To Do At Home



Helping to keep everyone connected with the Rainbow Times and Facebook pages.



Wellbeing



As well as current clients the staff team reconnected with people they supported in the past on a regular basis, to check how they were, if they needed any help, to facilitate the help if it was needed and just to have a chat with.

All of them reported how much they valued having this regular contact and knowing that someone was there if they needed it. I also took a series of one-off calls when it came to our attention that someone needed support and helped people to arrange food and medication deliveries and to understand current restrictions.

Tash



Supporting with regular well-being calls

103 people

Telford and Wrekin Work:



Wellbeing Independence Partnership (WIP) is a telephone information, advice and guidance service for all adults in Telford with care and support needs funded by Telford and Wrekin Council.

WiP 'The Go to Service'

Partnership work in Action



Telford & Wrekin
CVS
Involving, Inspiring, Supporting



The types of calls received during lockdown changed and lots of support and guidance was provided to support people with issues relating to COVID with signposting to local support services.

FPOC (Information & Signposting)



833
calls



399
Hours

General Advocacy



85
Hours

Case Work Total People supported for quarter



286
calls



1785
Hours

Spot Contracts



4
people



387
Hours



Telford and Wrekin Project Work:



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL

Taking Part was commissioned to provide advocacy services to support the Learning Disability Programme across Telford & Wrekin.



During the development of its specific strategy for the delivery of services for adults with learning disabilities, the local authority acknowledged that it is important to ensure that the voice of the people, for whom the strategy is being developed, is heard in a way that can influence what is being delivered locally.

Our role is to provide advocacy for adults with learning disabilities with the aim of engaging, consulting, collaborating and co-producing the Adult Learning Disability strategy and so shaping the future of service delivery in Telford and Wrekin to ensure that this group of people can live fulfilled lives.



SPEAKING UP!



The delivery of this service is managed through the newly formed **Learning Disabilities Partnership Board.**

We supported the local authority, with easy-read publications, in their first engagement exercise, collated the feedback and provided a report based on the questionnaire replies.

We have supported the expert-by-experience Co-Chair of the Learning Disability Partnership Board through 5 meetings as well as supporting the development of the Telford Voices Group. This is a group of 12-15 individuals who meet regularly to discuss the topics covered by the partnership board's questionnaire.



The Co-Chair feeds the outcomes of these discussions back to the board and on to the local authority.

Spot Contracts:

Paid RPR and Court of protection work:



Continue to support 2 clients on spot contract basis with external local authorities and CCG. Taking Part staff member is appointed as s1.2 representative in the Court of Protection and also litigation friend to one of the client. This client received

over 296 hours of support during the reporting period.

In person visits were not permitted so staff maintained contact via telephone and WhatsApp video calls.

Family Court Advocacy Support:



Spot contract advocacy support for parents going through family court proceedings. We have supported one couple under this contract and they received 91 hours of support, initially

from 2 Taking Part advocates, but this was reduced to 1 advocate over time.



Shropshire LA Carers Project:



This was a spot contract for Taking Part to provide telephone support for carers during the early days of the Covid19 pandemic.



Only 1 parent was referred into this service and they received 5 hours support over 3 telephone conversations.

National and Regional Work:



Diana and Michael were able to continue to work throughout the year representing Shropshire people in national and regional engagement groups.



NHS England Advisory Group

During this year we worked on Dynamic Support Systems which is about preventing people with mental health problems going into a mental health hospitals. Instead, they should have good support within the community. We also discussed the terms and references of the Advisory Group and the over prescribing of medication to people with learning disabilities and autistic people.



West Mercia Police Advisory Groups (DIAG and LIAG)



We continue to monitor the hate crime figures and the body worn videos and our comments are taken very seriously by the police.

Issues highlighted are acted upon. In Shropshire, incidents against people who have protected characteristics during the pandemic, appear to have increased.



NHS
Arden and
Greater East Midlands
Commissioning Support Unit

Arden&GEM

NHS ARDEN and Warwickshire Midland Commissioning

We were asked to provide the experiences of people with learning disabilities when they needed to contact their GP during the Corona pandemic. This was achieved by speaking with our clients and experts by experience.

Projects:

Moving and Grooving



Through the pandemic Taking Part continued to support Moving and Grooving parents through our Facebook page, platform offering activity ideas to keep our young families busy and engaged during lockdown and offering support through this difficult time.



Escape



The club nights had to go on hold during lockdown like so many other events. But Jamila kept regulars updated and connected via our social media pages!

Amberleigh Care
The Oaks

Independent Advocacy



The Oaks is a specialist outcome driven residential care, education and therapeutic service for looked after young boys who are 11-18 who have experienced trauma, have sexualised histories or who are vulnerable.

Taking Part have been commissioned by Amberleigh Care to offer an independent advocacy service to the young people living there. Michelle has been offering virtual advocacy drop ins for the boys during the pandemic.

Projects.



Bethphage

QCheckers:



We were looking forward to delivering the QCheckers service review a bit differently in 2020 – instead of doing individual interviews with the Bethphage clients, we were planning to do some group workshops with the clients to see if we could get a bit deeper into what they think of the services they receive and how they think things could be improved or done differently.



That was what we planned – but then Covid struck and all face-to-face contact activities were cancelled which meant that our workshops were cancelled too.



We waited it out to see if meetings could be held later in the year but we had to admit defeat in the autumn and come up with our Plan B – we would do some interviews via the phone or video calls. We were provided with a list of 21 clients who wanted a call and we managed to speak to 8 of these clients and complete the review questionnaire with them.

The clients were well supported by care staff and we got some valuable responses from the clients but we did miss seeing them in person.



Keep connected-Volunteers.



**KEEP
CALM
AND
STAY
CONNECTED!**



Citizen Advocacy:

We have been very fortunate to have had the continued commitment from all of our volunteers during this very challenging year.

Every volunteer has ensured that they maintained regular contact with their partner and all have supported them to try to understand what is happening. They have used various methods to ensure that all the partners know what the virus is, how it can be transmitted and have kept up to date with current rent restrictions so that the partners can stay up to date with the sometimes very confusing changes in the rules and can make informed decisions about their lives.



The volunteers have offered ongoing reassurance and a friendly voice to their partners who have found themselves isolated from their larger support network.

The volunteers, in turn, have also reported that the regular contact with their partner has also helped them to get through the tough restrictions that have been in place and have really valued the friendship they have with their partners.

**THANK
YOU!**

We feel very lucky to have such a committed and caring group of volunteers and wish to take this opportunity to **thank them** again for their time, work and commitment to the Citizen Advocacy project and their partners. The last year has highlighted how robust the Citizen

Advocacy model of advocacy is and how much of a positive impact it can have on both the partners and their volunteer Citizen Advocates.

Keep connected-Volunteers:

Experts by Experience:

We are very proud that we have kept in contact with each other through our WhatsApp group and doing lots of work through Zoom meetings. It took a bit of time before we could do them, but we

managed it in the end! We have done work about how people felt about lockdown, encouraging people to stay in, wear masks and feeding back how difficult it is for people like us to be online. Yes we kept calm and carried on!



Month 2 in the lockdown life of..
Our EE Whatsapp group..
how are we feeling?

We need good digital support and access to be a part of modern life.

Raising the issue not all of us are online!

Feeding back about our digital access

It's good to get the opportunity to feedback our experiences...

January 2021

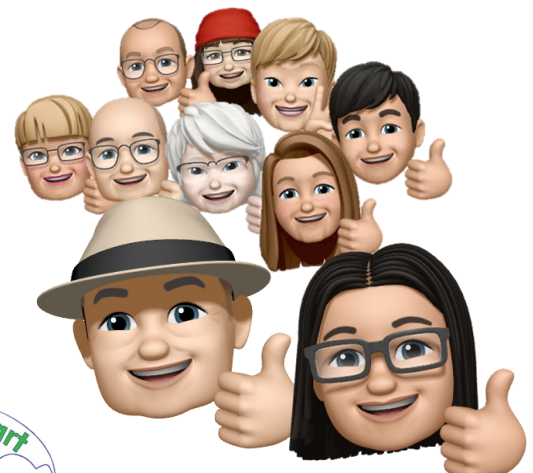
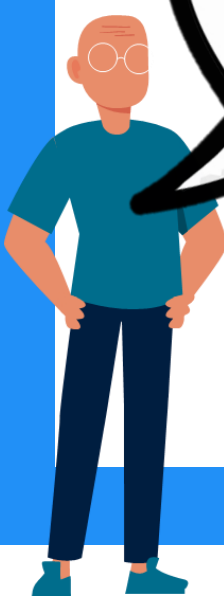
Lockdown winter

- It's worse because it's the winter and that makes me feel SAD
- Going to the doctors for other things
- Support buddies being allowed
- The news is bad and I am scared about this new strain
- The lockdown is better this time because we know what we're dealing with.
- Not going to work
- Not doing my hobbies like Special Olympics and Drama
- This lockdown was easier. It was the summer.
- Not seeing my family
- Not seeing friends
- Not knowing when it would end!

Lockdown summer

Comparing Lockdowns!

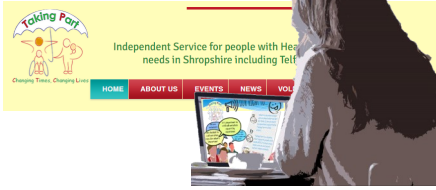
A big thank you to everyone at Taking part who have supported us. Welcome to our new members Rob and Mandy!



THANK YOU!

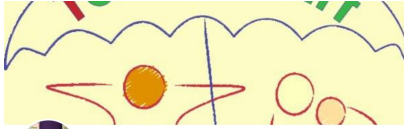


Keep connected-Social Media:



Website visits; 2094

You can find us at
www.takingpart.co.uk



Facebook
(Overall) 2482 friends

If you are on Facebook, visit our page and give us a like! www.facebook.com/takingpart



twitter

Twitter

On Twitter (Overall) we have 2667 followers.

Find us at www.twitter.com/takingpart



SOCIAL MEDIA



Create:Share:Inform


**KEEP
CALM
AND
CARRY
ON**

Jamila and Julie did a sterling job of keeping our friends, groups and followers informed via our social media pages!

Smiling!



Our Staff Team:



Taking Part has in place robust management, equality, health and safety and governance procedures and is fully GDPR compliant. The work we do is provided by 8 paid staff.

Trustees

Chair	Peter Simmons
Secretary	Susan Godfrey
Trustee	John Godfrey
Trustee	Jean Harris
Trustee	Paul Hume-Miller

Taking Part Contracted Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Julie Mellor
Shropshire Advocate and Paid Rep.	Diana Morgan
Shropshire Advocate	Michelle Evans
Shropshire Advocate	Tash Gilmore
Shropshire Advocate	Keith Billson
Telford Advocate	Keith Billson
Telford Information & Advice Officer	Beth Brooker

Sessional Members of Staff

Business Support Officer and Paid Reps	Gill Edmunds
Accounts Administrator	Kim Robbins
Social Night Co-ordinator and M&G support	Jamila Thomas
Sessional worker	Fiona Williams
Support Worker	Lydia Conner
Support Worker	Sheila Hill

Professional Advisors

Solicitors	Wace Morgan, Shrewsbury
Independent Examiners	Phillips Accountants, Telford

Taking Part's Accounts:

Taking Part

Statement of Financial Activities for the period 1st April 2019 to 31 March 2020

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2020 £	2019 £
Incoming resources from charitable activities					
Grants and contracts	2	210,353	274	210,627	236,262
Total incoming resources		210,353	274	210,627	236,262
Resources expended					
Charitable activities		205,393	-	205,393	236,219
Total resources expended	3	205,393	-	205,393	236,219
Net incoming resources		4,960	274	5,234	43



Taking Part's Reserves Policy:



Changing Times, Changing Lives

Reserves Policy

Use of Taking Part Reserves/Carry Forward money

General funds are unrestricted funds which are available for the use at the discretion of the Trustees in furtherance of the general objectives of the charity and which have not been designated for other purposes.

Designated funds comprise unrestricted funds that have been set aside by Trustees for particular purposes.

Reserves will be used to continue with the running of the service until other funds are obtained in the case of future lost income from statutory sources.

Funds in reserves will have to take into consideration payments required for staff redundancies and expenditure associated with the closure of the service if further funding is not forthcoming in the future. This expenditure will all be overseen by the board of Trustees.

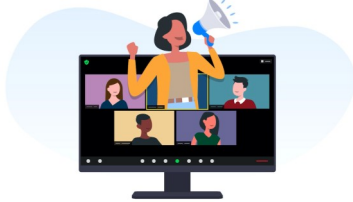
The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. In the event of the charity being wound up, the liability in respect of the guarantee is limited.

A year of strength and survival



Well, what a year we have all had to live through and survive. The COVID 19 pandemic certainly tested all of our resolve and presented itself with many challenges and change.

Taking Part is fortunate to have always been able to work remotely and from home as and when required. The staff team were all set up and we soon became familiar with virtual meetings.



Intense as virtual meetings can be, we managed to stay in touch with each other, our networks and clients.

The team did a sterling job of checking in on clients and carers with Wellbeing phone calls providing a friendly voice and listening ear for people who were in need of

some outside world contact. Our workload increased and we allowed ourselves to work flexibly to meet the demands of work and home life.

Our volunteers and experts by experience all supported Taking Part through this



challenging time and maintained contact with clients, each other offering peer support which was of mutual benefit to everyone.

I'm immensely proud of all of our team working during the pandemic going above and beyond to ensure that it remained business as usual, but working in different locations and environments.

Our partnership working continued and we upheld our contract commitments.



The Advocacy, Advice and Welfare Benefits (AAWB) contract in Shropshire remained stable and our quarterly reports reflected the reach and impact we have within this partnership. The Wellbeing



Independence Partnership (WIP) in Telford still provided that first point of contact for members of the public who needed support with health and social care needs. The partnership working between the teams grew from strength to strength and there was much learning from each other. Quarterly Reports again, reflect the outcomes and outputs achieved.



In July 2020 Taking Part were again awarded the Quality Performance Mark in Advocacy from NDTI. A great deal of work went into proving how our valued and critical our service is. The Assessment process was rigorous but a good reminder of our value base and purpose. We received a very successful final report which recognised the strength of our advocacy service.



In December we welcomed a new trustee to our board. Paul Hulme-Miller has strengthened our board with a good business acumen with a desire to help fulfil our charitable purpose. Our board of trustees continue to keep us in check and have provided a tremendous amount of support to the team during this year ensuring that our wellbeing has been paramount.



Going forward we all need to take stock of our position and celebrate that we have all remained resilient and celebrate our achievements as reflected in this Annual Report. Well Done everyone – we survived!

Stay safe, strong and resourceful

Julie



Whatever 2021-2022 brings we will stay strong and committed.



Changing Times, Changing Lives

Independent Service for people with
Health and Social Care needs in Shropshire
including Telford & Wrekin

Taking Part: www.takingpart.co.uk



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Company Registration Number: 04362949

Original figure artwork by

