

P3 PERSPECTIVES

ISSUE 5
January - July 2020

OUR IMPACT

We've supported 30,000 people
in 2019!

GUEST EDITORIAL

How can we change our
approach to mental ill-health?

IN FOCUS

Susan's story
"I barely leave my bedroom, let alone the house"

Our Mission

We work alongside people to improve lives and communities, to unlock potential
and open up new possibilities.



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ON THE COVER



Homework club at the Rugby Portobello Trust gives children access to extra support with school work if they need it.

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Printed on Carbon Captured paper

P3rspectives is the biannual newsletter from P3 Charity, bringing our supporters all the latest news and views from around P3's services.

1 Get in touch!



www.p3charity.org



[/P3Charity](https://www.facebook.com/P3Charity)

Who we are

We're a charity and social enterprise, made up of passionate people, who care about people. We run a variety of services all across the UK, that aim to give everyone the chance to be part of the community they live in and feel connected to society. We think that everyone is unique, and with support and confidence can unlock their inner potential, opening up a world of possibilities.

The key areas that we work in are:

- Homelessness
- Mental health
- Employment, education & training
- Criminal justice services
- Youth services
- Children & play
- Community-based support & advice

A new year, and a new decade!

Welcome to the latest issue of P3rspectives magazine, as we start 2020 (how did that happen?!) with a raft of personal stories, opinion pieces and updates on where P3's heading next ...

We take a look back at how we finished 2019, with our VIP3 conference featuring the expertise of people we work alongside (p.10) and a social media takeover which placed our Facebook, Twitter and Instagram feeds in the hands of people with lived experience of homelessness and mental ill-health (p.4).

There's also plenty of things to look forward to this year, as P3's Climate Change initiative is launched (p.10), we mobilise new services in Coventry and expand our provision in Wolverhampton, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire and Hillingdon (p.9).

As always, if you'd like to contribute to P3rspectives or know someone who would, please let us know!

Louise, Laura & Steve

Want to feature in the next issue?

We're always looking for people's stories, photos and opinion pieces from everyone who forms a part of P3, whether you're someone who has received support from us, a volunteer or member of staff.

We want our communications to reflect the people we work with, and the people we work alongside and we are striving to involve the people who use our services when we're spreading the word about P3 and what we do. Whether you know someone who's skilled at visual arts, wants to share their insights on an issue relevant to P3 or would just like to tell their story, in their words, please get in touch.



Email: Comms@p3charity.org

Phone: 0115 850 8190 and ask for Communications.

**Head of Communications & Marketing Louise Owen-McGee
Communications Coordinator Laura Gavin
Communications Assistant Steve Rowlett**

GUEST EDITORIAL

How can we change our approach to mental ill-health?

I'll freely admit: I didn't care much about vulnerable people. I was middle-class. Educated. Better. Until, one day, I realised I was one of 'them'. The roof over my head, paid for by a wife who had become my nurse, had morphed into a tent, pitched in a graveyard.

The discourse around mental health is and always will be complex, but it needs to shift permanently to one of understanding, rather than judgement: clichéd though it may be, most ordinary, working people are indeed only a few paycheques away from the street.

In the UK, we rightly pride ourselves on socialised medical care. Let's start to roll that out fully to tackle less palpable diseases: not just of the mind, but of ideology. Human beings must take care of each other, and incentivise humanity in those who cannot show it.

It is time to turn the so-called DWP safety net into a universally accessible, solid foundation. More outreach, more discussion, more compassion. Don't leave it to food banks and churches: they can't pick up the slack. Don't ask the poor to feed the poor, in dilapidated cities whose high streets now constitute a serpentine charity shop eating its own tail.

And as for Benefit Street and the 'poverty porn' explosion in the media: both the tabloids and the liberals got it wrong. What unfolded was a story of essentially good folk doing their best to form communities under pressures no-one should face. (The argument against "scroungers" falls flat: scroungers don't have offshore accounts. Everything they are paid, they put back into the economy.) By nature, these communities are fractured – as divided and flawed as the macrocosm that made them.

More people will continue to die from exposure, disease, suicide and overdose until the stigma is removed. Without stability, a decent home, and humanitarian support in recovering from addictions and breaking the cycle of self-medication, nothing much is going to change.

Merely handing out pills is not usually enough. For addicts to illicit substances, methadone is as insidious as the heroin it replaces; Valium piles misery upon misery. More cash (yes, taxes) must be allocated for dealing with serious mental problems as they begin to manifest – not while they are ending lives.

If schizoid or bipolar disorders were discussed in the same manner as, say, cancer, that would be a start. It isn't directly anybody's fault that society rejects 'the undesirables'. It is the system we choose to live under.

So I would suggest more dialogue, more action, and more services that actively enable people who are homeless and destitute to move away from Gin Lane, on which they perish in early middle age or younger, and into supported living. Morally and professionally well-prepared environments that provide dignity, humane counsel, various forms of therapy, and ultimately recovery, as far as is practicable.

P3, in my experience, has been a marked step in the right direction, and I am grateful to have found appropriate support and caring staff, funded largely by Gloucester Council.

The paradox, of course, is that these services are to be found almost exclusively in the economically stagnant, urban environments toward which troubled people naturally gravitate, whilst the wealthy retreat to pastoral homes (where charity begins!), turning a blind eye.

We now have people in Parliament who are at least paying lip service to ending homelessness – a task that necessitates tackling mental illnesses. Perhaps there is hope after all.

Anon, Gloucester

Extract from a longer work. To read in full, go to: www.p3charity.org/stories/approach-mental-health



www.p3charity.org/glosSOT



@P3GlosOutreach



@P3GlosOutreach



Social media round up



Our 2019 P3 annual conference went off with a bang, and a bit more technical wizardry than usual...



An amazing insight into young people's experiences of social media from RPT



Brilliant feedback about being a UFA Peer Tutor from young people who've experienced the care system

In October, P3 invited people we work alongside to take over our social media channels and share their creative work for World Homeless Day & World Mental Health Day. Here are some highlights ...

Soryna Ddin's sculptures capture her experiences of mental ill-health, domestic abuse and homelessness.



"I create art to please others and myself when I'm suffering with my depression and or looking to impress people with my design"
Lyndsey Williams



#TeamTakeover who facilitated the social media takeover at P3 Swadlincote

www.p3charity.org

/P3Charity

@P3Charity

Our loyal and brilliant staff and 300 volunteers have supported

30,000

people from communities across the UK

P3's Rugby Portobello Trust & University of the First Age have enabled

7,300

children and young people to benefit from education, youth and community services

14,800

people used P3's advice services enabling 8 people to change their lives for the better every minute, every day

We have provided homes for over

4,000

people

Some of the UK's most important societal issues

Our homelessness services have enabled

2,300

people to exit the streets into somewhere safe to call home

Our justice services have helped

1,600

people to move away from a life of crime and rebuild their lives

We are now providing services in 20 counties and across 45 local authority areas

That's **42%** of England!

And were alongside over

12,000

people every day, as they change their lives for the better

Over the coming year we plan to make sure what we do is brilliant and what people want.

Let's fight social exclusion together!

SUSAN'S STORY

Susan talks about her struggle to have her physical and mental ill-health recognised ...*

This is my tribunal paperwork!

For someone with mental health to have to deal with all this ...

I was already on DLA—but that had been a struggle to get onto—I was turned down the first time I applied for it. It was only after my first suicide attempt that they called Citizens Advice to do my paperwork for me and then I got the middle rate of care and the lower rate of mobility. But at my very first medical assessment they knocked me down to the lower rate of care.

A lot of the problem—particularly for people that are reasonably articulate—is they look into the way things are said.

Their letter told me I didn't need anybody with me when I'm in a bad place, I just want somebody with me.

With my mental health issues, I'm exactly the opposite! Most of the time I want to be left alone. I only call somebody when I absolutely do need somebody in the room with me so that I'm not acting irrationally, because it distresses me even more.

It sent me into a tailspin, I wasn't in a fit state to appeal and so they completely got away with it. It ended up driving me to a second suicide attempt.

So, when I had the medical to change from DLA to PIP, to be told that my suicide attempts were historic, to have them completely dismissed ...

I went from being in receipt of DLA to zero points for PIP.

Now when you're severely depressed that's basically saying there's nothing wrong with you. So, go ahead, kill yourself, get yourself out of the way, it's all in your head ... I was just sat here shaking, with steam coming out of my ears and no way to get rid of it.

Did you know it's not until you get to tribunal and you've signed a declaration to say that they can contact your doctor, that they do? As far as they're concerned the medical professional who comes out to assess you will have enough knowledge to form an opinion.

I had a paramedic for my assessment but paramedics are trained in acute conditions. People claiming PIP will have long-term chronic conditions.

They're using people that don't possess the right knowledge or experience ...

Some of the comments he used to justify the fact that I'm fine ...

Disdain would be my word. You know when someone has taken one look at you and has made judgements about you without asking. I ended up back at the doctors, screaming for help. I could see another ... well my next one probably wouldn't be an attempt ...

There was "nothing wrong with the speed and gait of my walk, I can touch my hair!" As I put in my letter, of course I can touch my hair, it reaches my waist! My arms are fine because I can adjust a pillow behind myself ... It didn't mention when I was doing the crouching test, I had one hand on the wall and one hand on the bed, so I steadied myself. I hold onto things when I get up because I get dizzy, but he said there was no sign of me being dizzy. The fact is the room can spin while I'm laid down without moving my head ...

I felt like they were saying you're making it all up. Considering I already have a chorus of voices in my head, they didn't need the ammunition. It just fed them quotes. It makes you feel more of a burden on society, more like your life is totally worthless, more like there's no point you being around.

It doesn't help that I suffer from conditions that aren't well understood.

Physically I have ME, it's like I have chronic arthritis, but I don't. I've had sleeping issues and oncoming pains since I was 20 years old. That's why the decorating stopped. Me and Shaun [my late partner] were in the process of redesigning the house. Instead of just one thing playing up at a time—it began to concentrate—it would be I'm getting dizzy and my knees are hurting and my neck's hurting. This was just before Shaun's suicide.

When you put Shaun's name into Google it's all on there about his claim ...

About a work capability assessment and that he was fit for work when he clearly wasn't ... basically the government have still not complied with a legal requirement to respond to the coroner's court. It's just all been swept under the carpet ...

With all that in my mind, you can imagine what having to go through the tribunal experience felt like. Constantly reliving my worst experiences and the tribunal date was right after the most painful anniversary in the year for me, the last date I saw Shaun, his birthday and when I found him.

Some of my records aren't even correct.

The biggest problem for me and the main reason why I need help is because of the pain in my hands. When your hands don't work you can't do anything and they tried everything they could to prove I use my hands!

Also, it doesn't matter if you can't maintain your house—that was straight out of the magistrates mouth,—it can be falling down around your ears and it doesn't matter to PIP.

Then some of my records aren't even correct. They contain a huge data breach! The woman who did the first mental health assessment sent these to the surgery. The lady couldn't tell the difference between Exeter and Essex. The notes are about a 'James' being released from Springhill prison!

Oh, also the magistrate called me out on having a passport: 'Oh it's in here that you have a passport, have you been away?'

I barely leave my bedroom, let alone the house. Why would I go abroad? I have a passport as a means of ID, not because I'm going to go abroad!

I only had my ESA to survive.

Yesterday I got my first month's single payment and they've already backdated it. So that's where the new white goods have come from. £4,800 that's the money I was owed for fifteen months.

They scored me zero. Whereas they've now given me the eight points to be eligible. It's ridiculous because it's based on the same assessment!

A lot of people do just give up and put in a fresh claim ... That's what they want. You actually have certain rights if they've changed you from one system onto another that you lose when you put in a second claim—if it isn't a continuous claim. If it's continuous they've got to pay it all the way back.

It's never been about trying to cure my diagnosed mental health issues. They were just determined to tick a target box. Initially he referred me to the specialist therapy team who turned round and decided that, the depression, is situational which I disagree with.

They won't see me, because of my self-treating with cannabis; you need to quit, you need to be clean for three months. What they're not getting is actually you're using as a way of getting through life!

What can we give you for these three months to get you off drugs so you can get the help? There's nothing, it needs to be the other way around.

The six to eight weeks with P3's Live Life was about trying to refocus, trying to get out.

With P3, I actually get the feeling that you know where I'm coming from a lot of the time, which I'm not getting from mental health. I dodge around saying a lot of things and none of the mental health people are saying what do you mean? They're not asking me any deeper questions. You can't get past the, 'Oh she uses cannabis'. They use it to turn people away,

I hope my story will help prevent other people going through this, particularly as I'm likely to have to do it all again next year! It was a three year award, but it's taken fifteen months to get here, so I've got to face the whole lot again. I will be sending all the tribunal paperwork, that will be in my application next time ...



@P3LiveLifeMK



www.p3charity.org/MK-health

***Names changed to preserve anonymity.**



P3 NEWS

What's been going on around P3 services in the last six months...



Award success for P3 Warwickshire

P3 Warwickshire's Street Outreach Team won 'Charity of the Year' in the Leamington Business Awards, for their work across the Warwick District. The team have formed fantastic relationships with local businesses, the council and other support agencies in and around Leamington, enabling 62 people to find a home away from the streets. With the launch of new Places to Stay services for adults and young people this year, P3 Warwickshire has grown from a team of 22 to a team of 80 in the last three years!

Department of Health funding transforms Hillingdon support for young people

In August, the Dept of Health and Social Care announced funding for local projects to help prevent mental ill-health in young people, including P3's Hillingdon services. The Yewlsey hub is being transformed into a 'Navigator Plus', aimed at a wider age range (ages 13-25) and hosting drop-in wellbeing appointments, social groups, peer support and more, in a 'one-stop shop' to enable young people to more easily access mental health services.



P3 Derbyshire volunteer named 'Volunteer of the Year'!

P3 volunteer Asa Hudson was named 'Volunteer of the Year 2019' by The Volunteer Centre in Chesterfield & Northeast Derbyshire, at their awards recognising contributions to the voluntary sector. Asa, a musician and DJ, volunteers alongside people in the BeWell Derbyshire service, supporting them to nurture their talents, improve wellbeing and express themselves through music.



VIP3 conference showcases expertise through experience

P3's 2019 VIP3 conference took place in November in Wolverhampton; a day of talks, workshops and discussions around how we can utilise people's experiences to improve P3's services.

The conference was facilitated by Team VIP3, made up of people we work alongside throughout the UK and the People Shaping P3 Involvement Team.

A key theme of the day was language, a hot topic at P3 this year. The subject was introduced by Jazz, who delivered a powerful speech on how she has been treated and described in the context of her mental ill-health. Karen then performed her poem 'Hi, I'm a Jam Jar' (available to read on the P3 website: www.p3charity.org/stories/im-a-jam-jar) about the importance of not defining people by their illness or circumstances.

Workshops in the afternoon were delivered by P3 staff and people with lived experience of the topics, from what makes a good support worker, to what could make our P3 Housing or Navigator hubs look and feel more welcoming.

P3 Goes Green

P3 has produced a Climate Emergency Plan outlining how we will respond to the current climate emergency, and move towards sustainable practices as an organisation.

Plans for 2020 include recruiting a Climate Change Project Manager to lead on making our processes and operations more eco-friendly, along with a transition team to ensure we consider the regional environmental challenges across all of P3's services.

CEO Mark Simms said:

"We are clear there is a very real Climate Emergency which will require immediate and radical action by everyone, and our charity is not exempt from this. This declaration requires that the entire charity's delivery and existence be re-thought in this context. This includes a commitment to Carbon Neutrality before 2030, with realistic interim milestones along the journey, including challenging but realistic targets."

Five Action Points

From 2020, we will be:

- 1. Removing water fountains and plastic cups from all P3 offices.**
- 2. Preventing junk mail:** we will contact companies who send our offices junk mail and asking to be removed from the list.
- 3. Installing internal recycling bins in our properties** so that everyone staying in P3 Housing has the chance to recycle.
- 4. Banning single use plastics in all P3 workplaces.** Colleagues and people who visit our services will be asked to take single use plastic home to recycle/reuse.
- 5. Ordering only eco-friendly merchandise.** We will only buy new promotional stuff that is reusable, made of recycled materials and/or can be recycled itself.

You can view P3's Climate Emergency Plan at: www.p3charity.org/green

Photo by Thomas Lambert on Unsplash



Do you need support?

P3 provides services in communities across the UK, supporting people with housing and homelessness, mental ill-health, drug and alcohol addiction, offending behaviour, social exclusion and more.



Could we help?

To find your nearest P3 service, go to www.p3charity.org/get-help and type in your postcode, or contact us for more information:

www.p3charity.org

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