



*A future for all ages*

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**If you would like this newsletter in plain text or another accessible format, please email [andrew.colclough@bjf.org.uk](mailto:andrew.colclough@bjf.org.uk)**

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## **Introduction**

### **Autumn approaches but it feels more like spring...**

My how time flies! This Autumn newsletter is a timely reminder that winter is on the horizon, and yet in many respects it feels very much like Spring! With the coronavirus restrictions now very much eased, people across the country are tentatively taking steps outside of their homes and are gently but cautiously easing back into the world that they have largely deliberately avoided for well over a year. A little like the new flower buds in spring as they burst through the earth once again to kiss the sunshine.

At the Foundation, we are gradually integrating back into our base at Parkfield House; seeing clients in the community again and meeting with colleagues face to face, not solely on a screen. However, many people are still anxious about meeting people, ever cautious about the virus raising its invisible head yet again. Indeed, many older people need to learn how to feel safe again and start to build their confidence as they reconnect with family and friends and other people who support them.

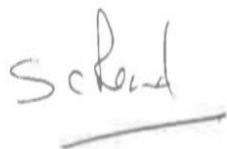
Throughout the pandemic, staff and volunteers at the BJF have continued to provide support to all clients, albeit in very different ways. Many older people with dementia have maintained contact with our project to access advice and to ease the overwhelming feelings of loneliness and isolation as the months have slowly ambled by. Now, people with dementia can meet with their advocates, but only when they feel safe to do so. The Healthy Generations Team have supported groups to maintain elements of creativity, with activities to embrace and promote individual confidence around digital technology as they have regular sessions around art, cookery, poetry and local history to promote health and wellbeing. The highly successful Bereavement Help Points project sadly draws to a closure, due to funding issues. We applaud the sterling work of this project, where staff and volunteers have managed to offer regular group and individual bereavement support to those who mourn the loss of their loved ones at such a difficult time. Never has the sense of loss touched so many people in so many profound and different ways.

Social prescribers have never been so much in demand, particularly amongst our ageing communities; and the PIER support at the Haywood Hospital has managed to maintain ways of helping people to maximise life's opportunities as they battle with long term conditions. Linking younger and older generations through education and other shared activities has been challenging throughout the pandemic. However, the determination and passion of our integrational team in NI have created tremendous opportunities despite not being able to meet up in person as much as they would have liked.

Everyone at the BJF recognises how hard it must be for some older people to start integrating back into the local communities that have been their support systems for many years. We are ready, waiting and willing to support you in the way that works for you. No-one will ever insist on you working with us in a certain way; we will continue to work in a person centred way as much as we are able - being guided by the very people whom we support.

Behind the scenes, our volunteers continue to grow from strength to strength; giving of themselves so selflessly to help us deliver our different, quality services. Of course, this includes all of our Trustees and our Patron (Joan Walley) who advise, lead and support us in all that we do. We know there will be challenges ahead, but challenges also bring opportunities, and we remain excited by the potential projects that we see on our horizon whilst seeking to inform *a future for all ages*.

So, as our local communities begin to thrive and develop once again, this newsletter celebrates the wonderful achievements across the Foundation. The contents recognise the challenges we have all faced since March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020 and reflects the losses that we have all had to come to terms with. Everyone at the BJF fully appreciates that we are all struggling to come to a new sense of normality; but we will maintain our support to those older people who need it through this time. Whatever the season, we will still be here...



**Emerita Professor Sue Read,  
CEO, Beth Johnson Foundation**



# The Support We Have Provided

During the Covid Lockdown we have regularly reported on the support that we have continued to offer to our clients through telephone calls, online virtual Zoom groups and by other means. As lockdown restrictions ease, we are beginning to return to more activities that involve direct client contact but always with due regard to Covid safety.

Here is a summary of the people we have supported in the three months of the Summer quarter, June through to August.



Thank you to all our staff and volunteers for continuing to provide excellent person-centred support despite the considerable challenges that Covid continues to present.

## Dementia Advocacy

The project is slowly getting back to some normality regarding carrying out face to face visits, although clearly visiting is different. Wherever possible a risk assessment is completed, this can be difficult when visiting clients who have dementia and live independently, asking them to complete a risk assessment can be difficult. As experienced dementia advocates, we are aware of these difficulties, but we do ensure we remain as safe as possible for example we have lateral flow tests daily before any visits. We ensure we wear full PPE on all visits and Care homes and Hospital visits are carried out via invitation only. However, the need to carry out face to face visits to our client group has been vindicated time and time again. For example, talking to Mrs F on the telephone asking “how are you” - Mrs F sounded well on the telephone but a face to face visit showed how Mrs F had lost over 2 stone in weight and had vastly deteriorated.

Cases referred to the project continue to be complex, and many issues have been exacerbated due to COVID. The project is currently running at maximum numbers for funders which is an achievement in itself due to COVID, and the project not being able to promote due to workforce limitations.

The Peer support group facilitated by the dementia advocacy project continues to flourish. When we were given the go ahead that groups could meet indoors, we immediately set up a meeting at West End Hub Centre. Members were delighted to see each other especially those members not able to access Zoom meetings. Time flew by during the meeting members catching up with each other agreeing it is not the same via Zoom.

A picture says a thousand words!



We had the wonderful news that we had been successful in our application to Innovation in Dementia. We had applied for a small sum of funding to the Enquirers Project. For the application, applicants were required to start with a question and our question was "Does dementia testing need testing?" We hope to commence the project sometime in September. Members have agreed that they want to include other DEEP (Dementia Engagement Empowerment Project) members in the project. Therefore, over the coming weeks members, with the support of the dementia advocacy, will be in the first instance producing a questionnaire around methods of testing used by memory clinics. Members hope that the work they do on this project will support a change in the manner of testing.

There is lots of excitement when we look forward to the coming months for the Dementia advocacy project. Members of the peer group are keen to start on the new project and many ideas are already being put forward.

More excitement involves a trip to Southport for members of the peer support group with money kindly donated by two of our members. The two members carried out some work with Innovations in Dementia and the payment they received they have kindly donated to the group.

Bucket and spades are on standby for our trip to Southport!!

**Betty Machin, Dementia Advocacy Manager**

[Visit Dementia Advocacy on the BJB Website](#) or visit our [Facebook Page](#)

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## Healthy Generations Project

At Healthy Generations we have continued to deliver all of our sessions virtually over the summer months. Primarily a Health & Wellbeing project, we have built in Digital Skills and Awareness into all of our sessions. Group members have become new friends, welcoming new attendees into the HG family and providing support and companionship throughout the long months.

*"Your, HG, positivity has helped me to get motivated - I'm now using my digital skills to download exercises off You-tube and online health apps"*

*"Because I'm more confident with zoom, I've joined other online groups"*

The Health and Wellbeing sessions are delivered as a rolling programme of sessions covering 5 topics: Emotional Wellbeing, Physical Wellbeing, Diet & Nutrition, Art & Wellbeing and Digital Skills.

Alongside these sessions we run regular Zoom support sessions, remembering our strap line

## 'Physically distanced; Socially connected'

- Monday Mood Boosters - Emotional Support
- Chuckles & Challenges - Social Support
- Maggie's Poetry Moments – Poetry for Wellbeing
- Art for All - Art for Wellbeing
- Local History

We are pleased that we are now able to continue to offer at least one session daily and this will continue into the winter months.

*"HG have been our salvation, we don't know what we would have done without them."*



Healthy Generations member David shares his sketch of a beautiful landscape image we used in one of our relaxing meditation sessions... Joining our groups has really helped him to feel less isolated throughout the pandemic. "Zoom has been a boom, HG team and tech buddies, I was on the edge and now back to reality"

[#letstalkloneliness](#) [#lonelinessawarenessweek](#)

## Social Media

Our media pages are a good tool to promote the project and also link in with themed days/events. The Zoom group members are happy to contribute artwork, pictures, poems to support our digital promotion.

## Joint Working

The Healthy Generations Team have worked in partnership with the Patient Information Education and Resource Centre (PIER) at Hayward Hospital. Free Zoom workshops were offered about self-managing a range of conditions, which included online resources available for all people aged 50+. Also, in collaboration with the Nat West Bank, we've offered Scam Awareness/Online safety zoom sessions. Over the next few weeks we will be inviting Trading Standards to give a consumer awareness session to group members.

<https://www.facebook.com/BJFHealthyGens>

## Tech Support

Healthy Generations have been providing one-to-one digital tech support for new clients who want to remain independent and living in their own homes. Participating in the Healthy Generations programme means that through remote telephone support, email exchanges, one to one and group peer Zoom support, clients have been able to start or reconnect with their journey of digital inclusion with increased confidence that they will be supported throughout. It's a wonderful development of the Healthy Generations project, one which we aim to continue into 2022!

## Our volunteers

The Healthy Generations volunteers continue to give their time freely to offer support on the zoom sessions and to help build confidence and up skill new clients to the project by offering Tech-Support, by telephone and over zoom. Tech-Support volunteer opportunities are available for anyone wishing to join us.

On Sunday 4th July, very early in the morning, our Tech-Buddy volunteer Maggie, alongside our Patron Joan Walley, made a guest appearance on BBC Radio Stoke, the Reverend George Eze show, as we launched our poetry book Creative Reflections; Life During Covid. Thank you both so much.

The poetry book is available here:

<https://online.flipbuilder.com/Beth%20Johnson%20Foundation/gqwx/>

## Onwards through the year

As lockdown restrictions have now been lifted and we are now transitioning towards living with Covid-19, we are making enquiries about delivering face to face session within small community groups and one-to-one support to clients who have been digitally exclude over the past 18 months.

We shall still continue to deliver all of our sessions virtually and offer tech support to enable this.

## Jane Snape Project Co-ordinator – Healthy Generations Project

[Visit Healthy Generations on the BJF Website](#) or visit our [Facebook Page](#)



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# Carer Support Service

*Digital Inclusion for Older Carers*

Over the years, **The Beth Johnson Foundation** has developed services that enable people to age well; through health and wellbeing programmes, advocacy services and staying connected to their communities. We take a whole community approach which means that we are involved in intergenerational work, bringing younger and older people together, and in supporting carers.

A Carer is someone who, without payment, cares for someone who could not manage alone. Across the UK today 6.5 million people are carers. 1 in 8 adults provide unpaid care for family and friends, and the 2011 Census revealed that there were over 1.8 million carers aged 60 and over in England – almost 16% of the population of this age range.

This group is often invisible, with many older carers providing long hours of vital care and support while their own health and wellbeing deteriorates. The pandemic, the restrictions with lock down and the risks associated with COVID-19 have all had a significant impact on the role of carers. Getting a break, balancing caring and the pressures of daily life has been harder than ever.

As covid restrictions ease, people have more freedom than they have had in a long time. But we know there are many people out there who will still feel unsettled at the thought of venturing out – especially if they are caring for someone who could be at risk of serious complications if they fall ill. Ongoing isolation and the inability to safely access support with their own wellbeing will continue to be an issue for many people.



**The Beth Johnson Foundation**

Are delighted to be a partner to the

**Stoke-on Trent All Age Carers Support Service.**

This valuable service Provides a single point of access for all Carers, ensuring that they have access to a wide range of support services, information, advice and guidance.

[Click here for more details](#)

**BJF** **nsc.**  
Beth Johnson putting carers first

Carers say that providing care can be extremely rewarding, but it can also bring with it many challenges. The emotional and physical demands of caring for a loved one and focussing on their wellbeing often means that the carer neglects their own. Finding support and building connections with people safely remains harder than ever, despite the easing of restrictions. But the **Beth Johnson Foundation Carer Support Service** are here to help.



In this digital age we have worked with older people and carers to understand the needs people have in accessing information and support online. We can offer 1:1 support to help explore the options that are available to access information, make new connections and look after your health and wellbeing from the comfort and safety of your own home.

We can support people in Stoke-on-Trent who are 50+ and are in a caring role with a range of issues such as:

- Becoming more confident in using digital technology
- Using digital technology to build social connections and reduce isolation
- Using skills to find online information and to understand the use of apps
- Connecting carers to BJF's Healthy Generations project where they can join other people in a range of creative groups and activities to improve health and wellbeing

We can help you to get the most out of any technology you may have; whether you need help finding and using suitable apps for your phone, would like to learn how to join video calls or have a piece of equipment you are not sure how to use!

Our recent '**Summer Sessions**' – a programme of zoom groups looking at topics around health and wellbeing - is just one example of how we can bring carers together in a supportive, informal environment to look at simple steps that they can take to help look after themselves – and to make some new connections along the way!

The caring role can be diverse, and many people do not identify themselves as Carers and do not seek help and support. If you know anyone who is aged 50+ and provides care to a family member, friend or neighbour, then please get in touch!



To find out more about the BJF Carer Support Service or make a referral contact:  
**Amanda Carter on 07867 003313 or email [carers@bjf.org.uk](mailto:carers@bjf.org.uk)**

**The Beth Johnson Foundation Carer Support Service**, is delighted to be a partner to the **Stoke-on-Trent (SOT) All Age Carers Service** led by **North Staffs Carers**. This valuable service provides a single point of access for Carers of all ages and ensures that Carers have access to a wide range of support services, information, advice and guidance. The service brings together a range of partners to provide holistic support; enabling Carers to feel better supported so they are able to make informed choices about their caring role and own health and wellbeing. For more information about the SOT All Age Carer Support Service visit: <https://www.carersfirst.com/s-o-t-all-age-carers-service>

## Bereavement Help Points

Although funding for the current phase of the Bereavement Help Points project came to an end on 31st August 2021, we are delighted to share the news that the BJJ Healthy Generations Project (HG) will be supporting the Bereavement Friendship Group to continue meeting.



Bereavement Friendship Group is a free social group open to people aged 50+ living in Stoke-on-Trent or North Staffordshire. The group meetings provide information on coping with both the emotional and practical aspects of losing a relative or friend; a chance to chat to trained volunteers; and an opportunity to meet others in a similar situation.

Healthy Generations will continue to run the group on Zoom on Thursday mornings from 10.30 – 12.00. People can join in from a computer, laptop, tablet or smartphone and we can offer technical support to anyone who needs help to join Zoom.

We have recently offered some outdoor community meetings and hope to be able to move to more community-based groups when it is safe to do so. Here is a photo of our first summer gathering at the Pavilion Café in Hanley Park, this was the first time that our group members were able to physically meet up as lockdown restrictions eased.



Talking openly to others who have experienced bereavement can help reduce feelings of isolation which has been particularly important during the Coronavirus restrictions of the last 18 months. As lockdown measures start to ease, some people who have been bereaved during the pandemic are finding it very difficult to establish new relationships and activities on their own, and being able to talk to others about their feelings and anxieties can really help.

The BJF Bereavement Friendship Groups have successfully established safe spaces for people who have been bereaved to meet others, share their experiences and start to learn how to build their lives around their loss. It has been a vital lifeline for those most impacted by the pandemic, grieving on their own with little or no support. New friendships have been made, new skills have been learnt, there have been tears, but also some laughter and the power of peer support has helped people through this most difficult of times.

### **Hilary Stefanelli, Project Lead - Bereavement Help Points**

**The BJF Healthy Generations team will now look after the Bereavement Friendship Group which will continue to meet on Zoom 10.30am to 12 noon every Thursday. For more information and meeting dates please contact: [bhpoint@bjf.org.uk](mailto:bhpoint@bjf.org.uk)**

**Tel: Amanda 07867 003313 or Jane 07930 321841**

**[Further information on the BJF Website](#) or visit our [Facebook Page](#)**



# Patient Education and Resource Centre (PIER)



What a difference a year makes! The summer of 2021 feels so different and much better than the summer of 2020.

Last year saw the overnight closure of the PIER Centre at the Haywood Hospital as the Covid 19 pandemic took hold. During this time the project has had to adapt to new ways of working.

Based within the Haywood Hospital's outpatients' area, we would normally provide help for patients to access any information they require by directing them to the appropriate resource. This continues; however, we are currently assisting patients, carers and relatives through our online facilities.

## Working in partnership with the Healthy Generations Project

A positive aspect to this new way of communicating with people has meant that the PIER project was asked to work alongside the Beth Johnson Foundation's Healthy Generation programme.

With the input of health specialists, a number of online presentations / interactive sessions were developed, specifically for members of the Healthy Generations programme.



- Session 1. An introduction to the PIER programme
- Session 2. Bone Health
- Session 3. Understanding Arthritis
- Session 4. Pain Management

These sessions were delivered monthly, by the PIER project manager with the aim of helping and encouraging people to access online information to help them manage and find out more about their conditions.

Feedback about sessions from the group members that attended and participated was very positive resulting in a way of working that the PIER programme will continue to develop around a range of subjects that patients and carers request.

## Stoke Makes Plates Project

Throughout the Covid pandemic we have been keeping in close contact with all PIER volunteers, not only to continue with the work of supporting patients, but to share and become involved in online wellbeing activities such as the Stoke Makes Plates Project.

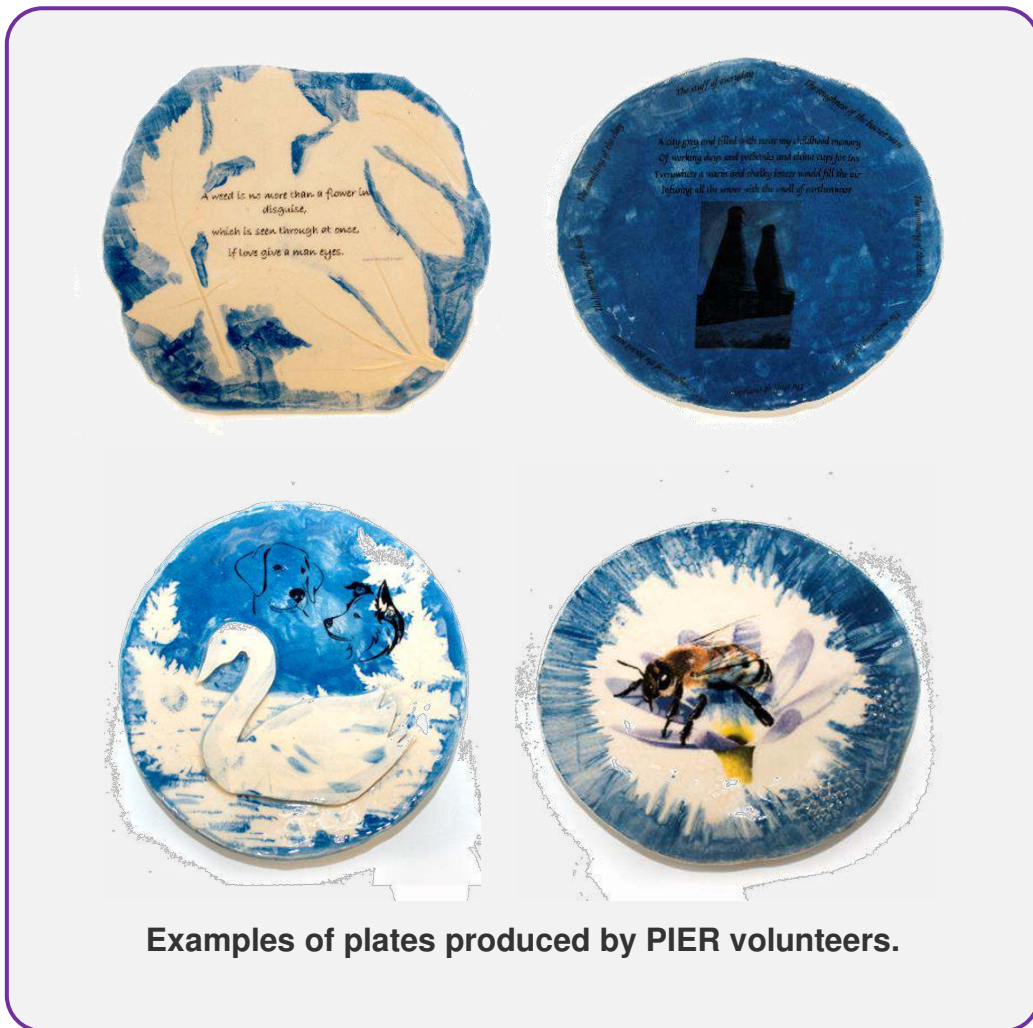
**Stoke Makes Plates** is a large-scale display of 250 plates designed by 120 Stoke-on-Trent residents – from **Haywood Hospital PIER volunteers**, care home residents to people in addiction recovery – commissioned artists and local ceramics manufacturers and inspired by Stoke's historic high-street.



### **Stoke Makes Plates at the British Ceramics Biennial. Image Jenny Harper**

With the Covid pandemic challenges presented throughout 2020 to 2021, many of the plate designs, including those of the PIER volunteers, took place online. Clay kits were given to participants (PIER volunteers) ahead of Zoom sessions led by artist Jo Mills, that saw kitchen tables transformed into clay studios.

Using plates as an artistic canvas, each volunteer made their own individual design. Some explored their heritage, personal stories memories or recent experiences. While others represented their hopes and wishes for the future or depicted what brings them comfort or solace.



**Examples of plates produced by PIER volunteers.**

Each plate created makes a direct connection with the rich ceramic heritage of Stoke-on-Trent. The designs reflect a personal experience of the world, captured in a contemporary moment.

The PIER volunteers have really enjoyed working on this online project, and now, as we come out of the pandemic, look forward to meeting and working with people and partners face-to-face.

The British Ceramics Biennial returns to Stoke-on-Trent (11 September to 17 October), with a vibrant five-week festival of new artist commissions, exhibitions and hands-on events that celebrate the life, character and creativity that ceramics bring to the city



The festival takes place at - The Goods Yard, 4 Glebe Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 1HG

Here is the link to the visitor information: <https://www.britishceramicsbiennial.com/festival/>

**June Brammar, Project Manager**

## Community Health Champions

VAST has been successfully awarded funding to work in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to develop a team of Volunteer Community Health Champions for the City.

Initially, the project will focus on promoting positive messages and dispelling myths around COVID testing and vaccinations to ensure everyone can make the right health decisions and protect themselves.

Over time the project will expand to ensure understandable, accurate and accessible health information is available to help residents make better choices for their long-term health and wellbeing.

Community Health Champions are local adults that volunteer to improve the health of people in Stoke-on-Trent. The role of a Community Health Champion is all about talking with people, and most importantly, sharing good information on health-related matters.

It's not about enforcement and 'policing' people's activities. Instead, Champions lead by sharing health messages in a friendly and helpful way.

Beth Johnson Foundation is proud to support the Community Health Champions initiative. Several of our staff members have trained to be champions and will cascade information through our volunteers and staff to users of our services and the wider community.



We are currently promoting the very important message that vaccination is our best defence against illness, and the precautions of HANDS, FACE, SPACE, FRESH AIR - still work! As we cautiously progress into a life beyond lockdown let's all do what we can to keep each other safe.

# Linking Generations Northern Ireland

As always LGNI have been busy developing a range of opportunities and resources to support our members to develop intergenerational work in their communities.

We are currently organising LGNI network meetings in all council areas in Northern Ireland. Our local meetings CONNECT people interested in intergenerational work and INSPIRE and SUPPORT the development of local intergenerational activities.

LGNI are also very excited to be planning a Northern Ireland wide training calendar offering our CPD Accredited Training in Intergenerational Practice - *An Introduction to Intergenerational Practice for Community Leaders & Practitioners*. You can find out more about this on our [Training, Advice & Support – Linking Generations NI](#) and we are also happy discuss bespoke training opportunities.

To register and find out about all our events visit the events page on our NEW shiny website [What's On – Linking Generations NI](#) or to go straight to registration click [HERE](#)

We continue to be involved in exciting projects and have a range of current and past projects on our site [Project Stories – Linking Generations NI](#)



A lovely virtual generation connection between [Healthcare Ireland](#) Nightingale Care Home Residents and [Howard Primary School](#) in Dungannon. These sessions facilitated by LGNI took place as part our [Soil Association Food for Life](#) Get Togethers Project. When we couldn't Cook, Grow and Eat Together face to face we did it virtually!



You can also sign up to an intergenerational network to get our information first hand via [Sign Up – Linking Generations NI](#). Our website has lots of new functions including a [news page](#), [events page](#), [resources section](#) and the most exciting bit a [networks](#) page for each local network! The site is still a work in progress, and we are busy uploading content but please go on and have a look!

**Vicki Titterington, Manager – Linking Generations Northern Ireland**

[Visit the Linking Generations Northern Ireland Website](#)



Linking Generations  
Northern Ireland

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## Lianne Burton – Social Prescriber Link Worker

Post lockdown has meant lots of old doors opening to Social Prescribing and also new ones too. Finally connecting people face to face is possible again and for many the issue of social isolation is, or will, be something of the past. The connecting of people to community-based groups and activities is the essence of the role and to hear the feedback from patients who are now going to lunch clubs/book clubs/friendship groups/walking groups etc is enough to put a smile on anyone's face.

Social Prescribers are very mindful that there are people who really want to engage in community groups/social activities but due to the Pandemic they are struggling with the confidence to walk through the doors of places they don't know or to walk up to a person they have never spoken to before and say hi. I am finding this is now the next stage of supporting some people to reintegrate into the community - confidence to engage with people again is the next stage of the post lockdown journey.



This support might be via meeting a person at a group for the first time/connecting them to a group lead / boosting self-confidence etc. These next steps are important to initial and longer-term engagement and support can make all the difference in someone connecting with the community or not. Knowing that there are new friendships to be formed and connections to be made means a brighter outlook for many in the community. Each person we support has their own journey to make, but with the helping hand of Social Prescribing, hopefully this journey will be a long lasting positive one.

**Lianne Burton, Social Prescriber Link Worker**

# Farewell to Lynne

## Thank you and safe travelling...

It is with a heavy heart that we say goodbye to one of the Foundation's long serving staff members. After 19 years of dedicated service, our colleague Lynne Wealleans has decided to retire at the end of September 2021. During her time with us, Lynne has established a national reputation for her work, and has been involved in a range of different projects for her local ageing communities. We wish Lynne all the very best as she can now spend more time with her family, but we are all going to miss her vast expertise, her creative thinking, and her humanity across the Foundation.

Good luck and thank you Lynne for everything.

All your friends at the BJF,



**Professor Ziv Amir**  
**Chair – Beth Johnson Foundation**  
**(On behalf of the Board)**



**Emerita Professor Sue Read,**  
**CEO, Beth Johnson Foundation**



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## Beth Johnson Foundation

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