



December 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to CAPITAL's December newsletter. Please have a read through our newsletter and diary of events to see what we have been up to and what we have coming up here at CAPITAL.

CAPITAL Update

We need to let you know that our inpatient hospital peer support work is now longer being funded. This is a direct result of the recent funding changes to the Mental Health Support Services contract. It's a tough loss for CAPITAL and for the wards we've supported for many years.

Despite months of difficult decisions, repeated meetings with commissioners, and every effort to protect the service, the outcome has not changed. We thank our peer hospital teams for their many years of dedicated service, delivered through some of the most demanding and challenging circumstances. Even so, most peers have chosen to continue with us as volunteers, which speaks volumes about their commitment.

Our public campaign is underway, including new video clips showing the impact of peer support and the reality of what's been lost. Please share them — every share strengthens our voice.

Despite tight finances, some member activities are continuing:

- **Member hubs in Bognor Regis, East Grinstead and Crawley**
- **Haywards Heath hub is paused for now**
- **Monthly online members' group, open to all - next one Weds 10/12 at 6pm**
- **Wakehurst trips, continuing as planned**

Several key programmes also remain in place:

- **Patient Viewpoint**
- **LEAG (Lived Experience Advisory Group)**
- **Drug and alcohol partnership work**
- **A small core staff team continuing with the organisation**

We're applying for new funding every week. We'll keep fighting for the work, the spaces and the voice that CAPITAL represents.

Thank you for standing with us. We'll continue to keep you updated.

-Duncan

Membership & Events Updates

From Heidi: I wish the very best to all staff losing their jobs this week at the hospitals and the support teams from Capital Charity. After over 15years supporting the patients at these Acute Ward Hospital with our lived experience. We are being made redundant.

All we have wanted to do is help to support the patients with our knowledge to get through a very difficult time. Giving them hope to carry on, and to show them through our journey that this is possible. Many of them wanting then do what we do as Qualified Mental Health Peer Workers. Not only do we support them in the hospitals but also the journey in the community with groups. This making them feel wanted and not alone.

The ones who have made this decision were asked to come and see what we do, but no response. Why is something that works and has done so for over 15yrs being taken away. This is saving money as we do this job on a very low wage. This a vocation for us not a job. If a member of the press is interested on hearing from us please contact us. *Pictured below – Get together at Oaklands with Mel, Michelle, Tabitha, Mandy, Carol, Roger, Kev, Heidi & Milo (and more peers online!)*



Coordinator News

Hi Everyone from Mid Sussex Hubs. At the start of the month we enjoyed good conversation and art session at EGrinstead Hub and were joined by the young Reverend from the church who warmly contributed to our discussion on the challenges of daily life. Unfortunately, the EG M Health District Association volunteer did not arrive as planned but we hope they will join us in the New Year.

Mid-month we held the all-members On-line Evening Hub, ran by Sam and members from the comfort of our own homes. There was a lovely turn-out and we benefited from mutual support, lively and warm conversation, meditation and visualisations, laughter and tears. Our theme this month was Self Soothing & Coping Skills as well as a natural check-in of how we were doing. Please join our next one with the link below.

We still have our Crawley Hub for November, this Wednesday 26th (all welcome, see Newsletter) but our Haywards Heath Hub is on hold till our volunteer Sophie has other volunteers to work with asap from early Spring (if you are interested pls contact Sophie and Sam who is now leading volunteers for the Mid-Sussex area – sophie.davison@capitalcharity.org sam.fox@capitalcharity.org). December's Crawley Hub is clashing with Christmas - there is the possibility of holding it the week before or meeting out somewhere for a coffee or meal (not funded by CAPITAL at this point due to financial situation) - any ideas please contact Sam sam.fox@capitalcharity.org *Pictured: East Grinstead Hub*



Wakehurst Moving Sounds - by Carol

There was a recently series of meetings at Wakehurst about being in nature. It was good meeting with different groups and doing different art projects. It was a space where everyone mixed together amongst nature, art and sound.

My personal feelings about the foraging of leaves and making an archway through which we each walked into another world was that it felt really uplifting and freeing. I encourage others to join Wakehurst walks and activities.





Please grab your tickets for Wakehurst Glow Wild from the link below asap if you would like to come along to this stunning and magical event. If you would like to join the Weds 3rd 5.10pm group with Sam, Carol & Lucy, book your tickets, let us know and we will gather in the café from 5pm. If you would like to attend the Thursday 4th session with Roy and also Sara's group from the Bognor area, book you tickets and let Roy & Sara know and they will meet you in the café first (you will have to check the times with them) sara.shepherd@capitalcharity.org roy.davis@capitalcharity.org

You can also book to go without linking up with our groups, as long as it is within the times of 3rd & 4th from 5.10 onwards (see the booking slots in link). Remember to book you free parking as part of the CAS scheme (it will come up on the link) plus there is the 272 bus and group taxis to the station after, if necessary, paid for by CAPITAL.

***Ticket Booking: VISIT WAKEHURST WHAT'S ON COMMUNITY ACCESS SCHEME
Your Free Glow Wild Tickets are now available***

3rd and 4th December standard and off-peak times only after 5:10pm
Join us for Sussex's ultimate festive light trail as we explore a new route of stunning lantern installations set in Wakehurst botanical landscape.

Glow Wild is an unmissable opportunity to herald the start of Christmas or welcome in the New Year. Find everything you need to know for Glow Wild in our FAQ's and select your date and timeslot below.

How to book:

1. CLICK THE LINK <https://glowwild.seetickets.com/timeslots/filter/glow-wild-2025?OFFERCODE=CAS>

2. Choose your date. Your free entry code is: CAS

3. Choose your time slot.

4. Select the required tickets. This offer is for your agreed group only. For our accessibility dedicated sessions, further information is available here. This is a first come first served offer and is limited to availability.



Join us for the next Monthly Online Members meeting:

Wednesday 6pm (second every month)

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82187471358?pwd=ShPD0LhxliClog7IErcQge0qClQQRJ.1&fbclid=IwY2xjawNLM-lleHRuA2FlbQlXMAABHhIGYrMgYXIKrjlh9-qO99QiSFBsDRYyK2pAgM-JNDDY-YR7j6VSW7gwpmxs_aem_5AUC04EKc24TJQtLsQKtrA#success

Hope to see you there! Wishing everyone a wonderful December and a magical Christmas, warmest wishes.

Please contact Lucy and Natalie with any questions:

lucy.parsonage@capitalcharity.org / natalie.butt@capitalcharity.org

-Lucy, Natalie, Sam, Sophie, Roy etc

Lived Experience Stories – Call out

As part of the project to tell the story of CAPITAL: where we have come from; where we are now; and where we are going in the future. You can tell your story anonymously. All stories are welcome! We have sent out postal postcards and email versions for all to contribute – but if you would prefer an alternative method please get in touch.

Email Alison with any questions livedexperiencestories@capitalcharity.org

Drug & Alcohol Partnership News

This month we thought it would be good to share some of the feedback coming out of the projects which have been funded by the Drug & Alcohol Partnership Community Fund. People attending the 'Creative Space' project said:

"I always come away feeling inspired by people's creativity" *and* "It's great to get creative in a laid back way"

People attending the 'Carers Support' project said:

"Carers support is my lifeline; I cannot talk to anyone else who understands my situation" *and* "At the groups, I have met long life friends who 'get it' and we all meet now regularly outside of the group"

And people attending the 'Cooking with foodbank food' project said:

“It’s good being able to spend time with others cooking rather than drinking” *and* “really good recipes that are simple to make”

The ‘Lived Experience Stories’ project with Stonepillow also attend a ‘Sow and Thrive’ course at Tuppeny Farm and commented:

“The site is wonderful mix of open planting areas, green houses, and specific project areas” *and* “Lovely venue, friendly knowledgeable staff, so helpful, I can’t fault it at all”

It’s been so great to see how the projects continue to bring value to communities across a diverse range of sectors and we look forward to hearing more feedback as time goes by.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone with lived experience who joined our final focus group at Alcohol Change UK this month. As always, it was deeply inspiring to hear such powerful and honest stories.

These contributions are invaluable as they will directly shape the mandatory e-learning programme for all housing support staff across West Sussex. By embedding lived experience into training, we ensure that staff gain not only knowledge, but also empathy and understanding of the realities behind substance use.

This approach helps staff:

- Develop trauma-informed awareness by recognising how past experiences impact current behaviours and needs.
- Build stronger connections by using language and practices that respect dignity and reduce stigma.
- Respond more effectively by tailoring support to individuals rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions.
- Encourage recovery and resilience by seeing the strengths and potential in every person.

Training in this way makes a real difference. It equips staff to provide compassionate, person-centred care, and ultimately creates safer, more supportive environments for everyone.

Email any questions to sara.shepherd@capitalcharity.org or mark.mills@capitalcharity.org
-Sara & Mark

Amplifying CAPITAL Voices

We are continuing our online (and offline) campaigning to amplify CAPITAL voices – people we have helped and supported or those who have been part of our dedicated team.

Please reach out if you’d like to be part of this campaign; either with quotes, an interview, self recorded clips or quotes, artwork, poetry or anything creative. This ties in closely to our lived experience stories project but is focusing on the impact of CAPITAL to give context to our campaigning.

Follow our social media pages and youtube channel to see all of our videos (linked at the bottom of the newsletter)

Contact kirsty.potter@capitalcharity.org if you are interested in contributing

LEAG News

It's been another rich month for the WSX LEAG. During November 2025, members came together several times to continue discussing and working through the next stages of the Neighbourhood Mental Health Teams transformation and further the Electronic Patient Record transfer. Members also met for the bi-monthly SCALE network meeting, which highlighted key areas of feedback such as consent and the importance of communication throughout patient's experiences. Guests during these meetings included key transformation colleagues from Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT), the VCSE Transformation Team, BHT Sussex and some familiar faces from CAPTIAL.

As the group reflect on the achievements of the first three years of the West Sussex LEAG, there has been a very proud and courageous feel during the discussions. The new phase of the WSX LEAG over the next 12-months will bring new opportunities, changes, and clarity with how lived experience and co-production can continue being enhanced and encouraged within the Mental Health Support Services across West Sussex.

If you or anyone/ organisations would like to know more about the group, please do explore our LEAG webpage here: www.capitalcharity.org/leag

Lydia (Co-production Lead for Mental Health, West Sussex), would like to say thank you to Jenny, Alison, Catherine, Sara, Tasha, Natalie, Carole and Duncan for all of their commitment, determination and successes throughout the last three + years; without their leadership and the group's members dedication, the WSX LEAG would not have achieved and succeeded as well as it has, which has paved the way to enhance momentum of the group and its next steps moving forward.

To find out more about the WSX LEAG, contact Lydia Co-production Lead at Lydia.taylor@capitalcharity.org
-Lydia

CAPITAL Impact Solutions

CAPITAL Impact Solutions combines professional expertise with lived experience to offer tailored peer focused services that make a lasting difference.

Focusing on consultancy and nationally recognised qualifications, to workplace well-being training; our work empowers individuals, organisations, and communities to deliver services that embed lived experience as a force for positive impact and change.

We are excited to launch our training and workshops soon!

Please spread the word and you can sign up to the newsletter to learn about

all of the opportunities below:

www.capitalimpactsolutions.co.uk / www.linkedin.com/company/107456713

Please Consider Donating To CAPITAL

Support CAPITAL & Win Big! Join the Giving Lottery for just £1 per ticket and help fund CAPITAL's vital work. You could win up to £25,000 in the jackpot! 50% of proceeds go directly back into CAPITAL's community work, meaning every ticket helps and you could be a winner whilst your support makes a real difference.

Read more: <https://www.givinglottery.org.uk/support/capital-project-trust>

From Payroll Giving where you can donate tax free through your salary, and EasyFundraising, which allows you to donate each time you shop online at over 7000 shops; through to raising funds however you see fit - perhaps cake sales, or car washing, or even running a marathon!

Alternatively, you can help by sharing our social media posts to raise awareness of our work (our social pages are linked below) by volunteering, or telling us about any fundraising opportunities you hear about. Whatever you do to support us, now or in the future, we want to say a big THANK YOU!

Call out for people with contacts to staff or stations on the southern network

We are looking for people who have close contact with staff or a station on the southern network. If there is anyone with a relationship - to a station or to members of staff, please do get in contact with us enquiries@capitalcharity.org or 01243 869662.

Other opportunities

Sharon's Mindful Relaxation Group (online)

Independent out of hours mindful relaxation group, online on zoom, alternate Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. The group is free to join, but donations encouraged.

Come along for mindful meditations, poetry or book readings, play relaxing music, and particularly enjoy a Chocolate Segment, where we mindfully eat chocolate! There is a high level of peer support within the group, and it's very welcoming.

For more information email: Sharon.mitchell44@yahoo.co.uk



Tuesday 2nd December

3pm - 4.30pm

with special guest musicians from

London
Philharmonic
Orchestra

Everyone welcome!

In the Main Hall of
The Shoreham Centre
2 Pond Road,
Shoreham-by-Sea,
BN43 5WU

Email: claudia@soundcastle.co.uk
for more information

More information:

<https://www.sussexrecoverycollege.org.uk/news/soundcastle-winter-warmer-festive-celebration>

West Sussex Libraries – Essential Toiletries kits

As part of our ongoing Cost of Living response, West Sussex Libraries will again be providing Essential Toiletries Kits free to residents. The Essential Toiletries Kits will contain shampoo, conditioner, body lotion, roll on deodorant, toothpaste, adult toothbrush and tissues. All will be in a sealed zip lock bag. Children's toothbrushes will also be available for people to add to the Kits themselves, depending on their needs. They will be available from all 36 libraries and will be on display for anyone to collect.

The Kits will be available in libraries from Monday 24th November while stocks last.

Please contact Vicki Davey vicki.davey@westsussex.gov.uk or Emma Clarke emma.clarke@westsussex.gov.uk with any questions

Thank you for reading our newsletter! - Your CAPITAL team

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Website: www.capitalcharity.org

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