



Welcome

It's good to be able to write this message after what has been a very difficult and worrying year for everyone.

Reflecting on the last six months in particular, it is difficult to begin to describe the changes that we have had to implement and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on everyone's lives. In this newsletter, we will provide you with information about what changes have been made and also give reassurance that our services will continue to be delivered as effectively as possible and not impact upon you in any negative way.

Looking back to March, Penderels Trust very quickly implemented safety measures for the benefit of all of our customers and our own staff. We set up all our staff with the equipment they needed to work from home, which has continued in line with Government guidelines. We also put in place measures to increase the amount of information we shared and received electronically, reducing the impact of postal disruptions.

On our website, we have provided up-to-date information for our customers throughout the pandemic. Hopefully everyone has had the chance to read the information we have produced.

I want to thank all of our customers including everyone reading this message and newsletter. I know that alongside all of the changes, there has been disruption to the way you interact with Penderels Trust, and in many cases we are doing things very differently to how we were previously. This has only been achievable with your support and understanding, and we will continue to strive to offer the best service we can.

I also want to thank everyone connected with the Trust for their support and hard work throughout this period.

We have included our Annual Quality Review survey with this newsletter. We would be very grateful if you could complete this short questionnaire to let us know what you think.

Please enjoy the rest of this newsletter. I hope that when I write to you again, we will be reflecting on the passing of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Gary Jones | Chief Executive



Best Day of my Life

by Heidi Crowter

Heidi is supported by our team in Coventry. You may remember reading about Heidi in our Autumn 2018 newsletter talking about her experience of speaking at the World Down Syndrome Congress in Glasgow.

This time Heidi wanted to share some news of a more personal kind as she recently married James.

"Hiya. I recently got married to a man called James Carter. Me and James are 25 and 27 and we have been together for 2 years, we were engaged after one year.

James asked my dad four times to marry me and he finally got the approval - 4th time lucky!!

Every love story has a beginning. My husband lived in Weymouth. He attended my second cousin's church and his wife told James about me.

When I first met him, he made a fantastic impression on me. The moment I fell in love with him was when he decided to have a bible study because we are both strong Christians and we both love singing hymns. (As the pastor said at our wedding: 'Together we make a joyful noise, sometimes we are over enthusiastic' and I agree with him.)

Since we got married, we have had quite a lot of media interest because we were one of the first couples to get married in lockdown.

We were supposed to have over 200 guests but because of Covid-19, we had to cut down to 30.

We were on BBC News and ITV Central talking about the wedding - we are loving being a famous couple. I know Sally Phillips who presents 'Sunday Morning Live' and we were filmed for that as well and it was so fun.

We got married on our planned date of Saturday 4th July 2020 at 2:30 p.m. at Hillfields Church, Coventry. It was meant to be at Queen's Road Baptist Church but we had to change it to my church due to Covid-19. Our reception, at Chesford Grange, near Leamington Spa, has been postponed to next year.

We were planning to have our honeymoon at Lake Garda in Italy but due to Covid-19, we had a 'staycation' in Coventry and had a lot of fun going to different places. The first day we went to Draycote Water and walked 100 miles*, we went to the cinema and had lovely meals out!

My staff are employed with support from Penderels Trust, mine and James' "future guides" have helped and supported us in our marriage. We call them "future guides" because they "guide us now and into our future."

They helped me to learn how to travel from Coventry to Weymouth independently to meet James! They continue to support us whilst we are living together in our flat.

We are loving life and living together. I love my husband and I have married my best friend! It was the best day of my life."

*Editor's note - it was about 100 metres.



'Light at the end of the Tunnel'

by Aaron Randall

Aaron Randall is supported by our Appointeeship team in Worcestershire. Aaron shares his thoughts on how to make the most of a difficult time. Well done, Aaron!

"When lockdown first began, I felt anxious and worried about what was to come. I was trying to think of ways of how I could fill my days without my usual activities being scheduled.

I began to think of ways that I could use this opportunity to turn it into a positive and focus on things that could help build my future. Some days have been very difficult but I have remained focused and have built on my personal skills. I have begun cooking various meals independently. I have been cleaning my home and taking pride in the things I own.

Even though the world has changed, I will remain positive and remember that anything is possible if I put my mind to it and there is always light at the end of the tunnel."

Handy Resources

There has been so much information available since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, it can be hard to know what is relevant and useful to you.

We have tried to make sure that any information we have shared with you during this time is directly relevant and up-to-date for direct payment users. We have put all Covid-19 related information on the home page of our website (www.penderelstrust.org.uk) so you can find it easily. We regularly update and add to this section to make sure it is always correct and relevant.

Here are some of the current resources that we think you may find useful. Phone apps are available both to Apple and Android users and are free to download.

NHS App (this is different to the NHS Covid-19 App)

Download the app to:

- **get advice about coronavirus** – find out what to do if you think you have the virus
- **order repeat prescriptions** – see your available medicines, request a new repeat prescription and choose a pharmacy for your prescriptions to be sent to
- **book appointments** – search for, book and cancel appointments at your GP surgery, and see details of your upcoming and past appointments
- **check your symptoms** – search trusted NHS information and advice on hundreds of conditions and treatments, and get instant advice or medical help near you
- **view your medical record** – securely access your GP medical record, to see information like your allergies and your current and past medicines
- **register your organ donation decision** – choose to donate some or all of your organs and check your registered decision
- **find out how the NHS uses your data** – choose if data from your health records is shared for research and planning.



For more information and to see what else you can do via this app, visit www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/the-nhs-app

British Cross First Aid App

You never know when you might need to give first aid. The British Red Cross has a free First Aid app which includes a range of first aid scenarios you may come across and short 'what to do' video clips you can follow in an emergency.

Download for Apple and Android phones or visit www.redcross.org.uk/first-aid/first-aid-apps



Help cards for people with dementia

The Alzheimer's Society produce a number of different help cards for people with dementia to use and carry with them, to make it easier to get help when they are out and about.

These can be ordered from their website and are free.

www.alzheimers.org.uk/get-support/publications-and-factsheets/helpcards



Exempt from wearing a face covering

If you are exempt from wearing a face covering due to your personal circumstances e.g. disability or health condition, you may be more comfortable carrying a message that explains this.



These can be downloaded via this link: www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own

Please give me space

The Distance Aware initiative has been endorsed by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to help promote the need for social distancing and to help those who may have difficulties or concerns in maintaining social distancing.



These badges can be printed or shown on a mobile phone. Please visit the website to find the templates.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/please-give-me-space-social-distancing-cards-or-badges

PAs eligible for flu jab

All frontline health and social workers including personal assistants are being encouraged to get the winter flu vaccination. This year, PAs are able to access the vaccine free of charge from GPs and community pharmacies via the NHS Complementary Scheme.

PAs can simply contact their GP or ask at their pharmacy and request the vaccine which is

available now. If they are asked to identify themselves as a PA, an eligibility letter has been produced in case they are asked to show it.

This is available from our Covid-19 section on the home page of our website www.penderelstrust.org.uk

Trustees

Are you interested in shaping the future of Penderels Trust?

We are currently seeking expressions of interest from individuals to join our Board of Trustees. In particular, we are looking for two trustees:

- 1) Someone who uses the services of Penderels Trust
- 2) Someone who has a finance background with financial qualifications and the ability to interpret and explain financial information to the board. You should have an understanding and interest in the social care or voluntary sector.

We are now holding virtual board meetings so you don't need to be local to our head office in Coventry to consider this role if it interests you.

We may ask you to come to one or two meetings a year in Coventry but this will depend on the ongoing situation with Covid-19.

For more information and our trustee pack, please email Paula Walkington (pwalkington@penderelstrust.org.uk).

Successful PA Recruitment during the Pandemic

We have supported many people to recruit successfully since the start of the pandemic. We have had to think of different ways that we can support people to recruit safely to minimise the risk of spreading the virus.

Job Description and Advertisement

The job description is always the starting point so this needs to be right. Make a list of the things that are important to you and what your goals are. A job description is a formal document but it doesn't need to be complicated, it should be an everyday list of what you want.

The job advertisement process has remained the same as it was before the pandemic. We've seen a good level of interest in PA roles and we are working hard to promote the role of the PA as a valued career choice.

Holding a Pre-Interview Stage

Usually, the first time you will see or speak to a potential candidate is when you hold a face-to-face job interview.

We now recommend adding a pre-interview stage which is simply a quick and informal telephone call to the potential PA. This gives you the chance to get to know each other, to ask a few questions and to get an idea if you are going to be a 'good fit' for each other. It also significantly reduces the number of 'no shows' at formal interviews.

Your Independent Living Adviser (ILA) can provide you with a guide for pre-interviewing and an idea of questions you can ask.

Virtual Interviews

During lockdown, we supported employers to conduct 'virtual interviews' so they didn't have to invite people into their homes for face-to-face interviews. Employers used video programmes like Zoom to successfully employ

their PA. This has included people who have never used video calling before, and people who have never interviewed before and were nervous about doing so. If you have a support service from us, your ILA can help you set up and run these interviews.

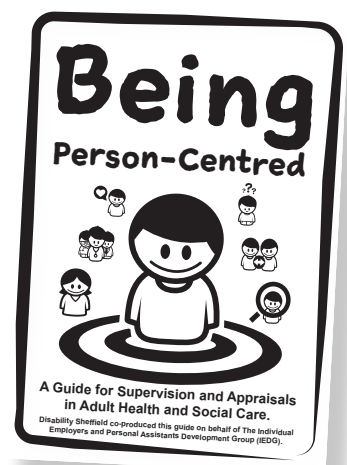
At the time of writing, Government guidance does allow some face-to-face contact (making sure you adhere to social distancing rules), but you may still wish to consider interviewing by video call.

You still need to set up interview times as you would a normal interview and send the potential PA a link to the video programme you are using. You will need to have a standard set of questions so you ask each candidate the same thing to make sure it is a fair process. You should follow all the usual procedures of obtaining a job reference and checking they are legally allowed to work in the UK before making a job offer.

Guide to Supervision and Appraisals

Once your PA has started work, you may want to think about how to make your working relationship the best it can be. We really like the Guide to Supervisions and Appraisals that has been produced by Disability Sheffield which focuses on person-centred care.

disabilitysheffield.org.uk/admin/resources/print-version-being-person-centred-2019-black-text-on-white-background-compressed-1.pdf



Employer Updates and Reminders

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Don't forget that you need to provide your new member of staff with their Terms and Conditions of Employment (T & Cs) on the first day they start working for you. This is a legal requirement.

Annual Leave

It is important that you keep a record of the annual leave that your employee(s) have taken. It is not part of a payroll service to do this. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, you can allow your PA to 'roll over' their annual leave to the next year if they've been unable to take it this year. If at all possible, we would ask you to encourage your PA to take their allocated annual leave and not roll it over as it is important that they have proper breaks from work.

Employer's Liability Insurance

If you are an employer, you are personally responsible for the welfare of your employee(s) whilst they are working for you and you would be held legally liable for any injury to them or damage to their personal property.

It is a legal requirement to have an employer's liability insurance (ELI) policy in place when someone starts working for you. When you become an employer for the first time, we will support you with this process if you have our direct payment support service. It is important to remember to renew your policy every year.

There are a number of insurance providers that offer a policy suitable for direct payment employers. In some local authority areas they may tell you which insurance provider to use, but in most areas you can choose which one you buy your policy from.

The list opposite shows details of providers that offer suitable ELI insurance. There will be other providers in the marketplace but it is important they offer the cover you need.

Fish Insurance have re-launched their insurance packages to make it easier for individual employers to choose the right package for them.

If you are an existing Fish Insurance customer, this won't affect you until your existing policy comes to an end. At this point, their advisers will be happy to talk through the different policies to help you make the right decision.



Premier Care (Mark Bates Ltd)

Tel: 01476 514 478

Email: enquiries@markbatesltd.com

Web: www.markbatesltd.com



Surewise

Tel: 01268 200 020

Email: customerservice@surewise.com

Web: www.surewise.com



Fish Insurance

Tel: 0333 331 3770

Email: admin@fishinsurance.co.uk

Web: www.fishinsurance.co.uk

Payroll Update

We have worked really hard to make sure we continue to deliver our full service throughout the pandemic period. With our offices closed most of the time, we have had to work in a slightly different way to make sure that all our payroll cycles are processed correctly and on time.

We also had to ask you as our payroll customers to work differently too - by communicating by email rather than telephone and most importantly, to email your timesheets to us rather than posting them. Thank you very much for helping us by doing this; we know it was a change and for some people, the first time they had used email.

Emailing Timesheets

It is really important that you email your timesheets to the email address given at the top of your timesheet by the deadline date and time for your pay cycle. This means it will arrive with the right team for processing. We are happy to accept photographs of your

timesheet taken on a smart phone as long as we can clearly read all the information and see the employer signature at the bottom. As our payroll office is not open every day, we cannot guarantee any posted timesheets will be processed on time as we only receive post twice a week.

Email and Junk Folders

When you first receive an email from us, your email system may not recognise us as a reputable organisation and put our email into your 'junk' or 'spam' folder. This means you may not see it as it won't be in your inbox.

We have had a number of customers who have missed our emails to them as they are sitting in a junk folder. If you are expecting an email from us and haven't received anything, please check your junk folder. It's a good idea to save our email address as a contact so any future emails from us will arrive straight into your inbox and be easy to see.

There's no stopping us, we're zooming!

With face-to-face peer support group meetings not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions, we knew we had to come up with something else to make sure the people we support could still come together as planned.

In Coventry, we decided to try virtual peer support groups by video call on Zoom. We emailed everyone we support in the city and invited them to come along for an hour to chat and meet other direct payment users online. Two members of our Coventry team, Julia and Jane, were on hand to answer any questions people had.

One of the participants of the first group was 85-year-old Jean who had never used video calling before but was keen to join in. Jean's independent living adviser (ILA) gave her some support to get started and she was able to join the meeting. She said she was delighted to be able to be part of it and it really made her day.

Jean's motto is that you are never too old to learn new things!

