



# THE PLYMOUTH ALLIANCE

Newsletter - December 2025 edition

Welcome to the latest edition of the Plymouth Alliance Newsletter



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The Plymouth Alliance  
is commissioned and  
funded  
by Plymouth City  
Council.



# FESTIVE OPENING HOURS ACROSS THE ALLIANCE

	Shekinah	Hamoaze	BCHA*	Harbour/ Livewell	The Zone	Path
Wednesday 24 December	8 - 1	9 - 5	24/7	9 - 3	10 - 2	9 - 5
Thursday 25 December	8:30 - 12:30	10 - 6	24/7	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 26 December	Closed	10 - 6	24/7	Closed	Closed	Closed
Saturday 27 December	Closed	Closed	24/7	Closed	Closed	Closed
Sunday 28 December	Closed	Closed	24/7	Closed	Closed	Closed
Monday 29 December	8 - 1	9 - 5	24/7	9 - 5	10 - 2	9 - 5
Tuesday 30 December	8 - 1	9 - 5	24/7	9 - 5	10 - 2	9 - 5
Wednesday 31 December	8 - 1	9 - 10 (pm)	24/7	9 - 3	10 - 2	9 - 5
Thursday 1 January	9:30 - 11:30	Closed	24/7	Closed	Closed	Closed
Friday 2 January	8 - 1	9 - 5	24/7	9 - 5	10 - 2	9 - 5

\*George House and SSTS is open 24/7 365 days a year. All other BCHA services closed bank holidays only.  
Out of hours contact number 01202 410500.



# NEWS FROM HARBOUR

## Homeless Intervention Team Highlights

On 3 September, the team had their Overdose Awareness Day tree planting ceremony, where a tree was planted in memory of all lives lost to substance use, and seeded paper with personal messages to people lost were also planted.



The plaque was kindly donated by Young Johnson Monumental Masons.

The team with the newly planted tree



The team raised £252.56 to go towards provision packs for clients with a “40” themed bake sale on the 8 October, including a raffle for a cake donated by Cake Box Plymouth.



Cupcakes baked by members of the HIT team

# delicious!

The team also ran the Health & Wellbeing Day at Shekinah on 4 November, where they offered food, drink and a variety of services from organisations. Winter provision packs were given out to clients there, containing everything from food to hand-knitted mittens to flasks.



# NEWS FROM HARBOUR

The alcohol team has received feedback from a range of people engaged with the alcohol working group. The team are now effectively engaging with a broader range of clients and are constantly reviewing their delivery to ensure it fits the group they are working with.

*"I haven't told anyone about my drinking, but this week I shared it with my Mum, and she was so supportive. I am now starting to drink later than I was, and I've had a realisation moment that I have an unhealthy relationship with alcohol."*

*"My 18-year-old son told me he was proud of me for coming to the workshop."*

*"Refreshing, educating, inspiring to change my life to a better me.  
A massive thanks to you all. I feel I'm on the right path to succeed."*

*"Passing on the knowledge I have learnt here, to help other people in a similar situation to me."*

*"Absolutely fab workshop. Very sad it is over but will make sure I attend embrace. Thank you Chloe, Michael and Julia."*

*"I used to go to the shop next door (Bargain booze), and he saw me in some bad ways. But he said that he's noticed a positive change in me now."*

From a recent workshop, 100% of the attendees said they felt able to apply what they had learnt, they felt respected and felt the group was delivered in a way they understood. This success reflects the team's commitment to engaging clients effectively and adapting delivery to meet diverse needs. A great example of collaborative effort and impact worth celebrating.







# COLLABORATIVE CRISIS RESPONSE

## Livewell Complex Needs Team supporting BCHA in the George Hostel

Staff from the Livewell Complex Needs Team (CNT) were asked to review a patient who had been previously open to Community Mental Health Service (CMHS) and had several inpatient admissions including stays in Psychiatric Intensive Care Units (PICU).

There had been a distinct difference in the client's presentation which had warranted concern from BCHA staff. The Complex Needs Team initially reviewed the patient after attending the hostel Multidisciplinary Team Meeting (MDT) and returned later the same day with a colleague as the patient was not agreeable to being seen, the tentative plan being that if the patient agreed, a referral to the Home Treatment Team (HTT) could be made to possibly reduce the risk of an inpatient admission.

After the second visit to the patient in the hostel and refusal to be seen again, the CNT shared concerns with our Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) colleagues who agreed to complete a joint visit with the team.

Support and guidance was given to BCHA on how best to manage the patients' needs in the spaces in between visits with practical advice given on when to call First Response Service (FRS), and other emergency services.

The patient was reviewed by the AMHPs and it was deemed a Mental Health Act Assessment (MHAA) would be an appropriate intervention. An assessment was undertaken, and the patient was detained under the Mental Health Act (MHA).

Whilst this is a restrictive outcome for the patient, it is important to note that he was able to remain living in his home as the BCHA team felt supported and listened to by CNT & FRS colleagues. This patient was not open to any Mental Health (MH) team and the work was 'ad hoc' due to concerns being raised by BCHA staff.

The BCHA staff were skilled in noticing the change in presentation with this patient and then raised these concerns in a timely manner to ensure good care and appropriate outcomes.

A great example of collaboration and teamwork with in the Alliance - well done!

Zoe Lloyd - Livewell



# ZAP UPDATE

## Care Leavers



November 2025 was National Care Leavers Month. Several of the ZAP team have visited the Council's new purpose-built Care Leavers Hub at Frederick Street. The new space supports young people in crisis by providing a safe, calm, youth-focused environment to de-escalate situations. It prioritises those leaving care, offering holistic support to develop transitional skills and strategies for independent living.

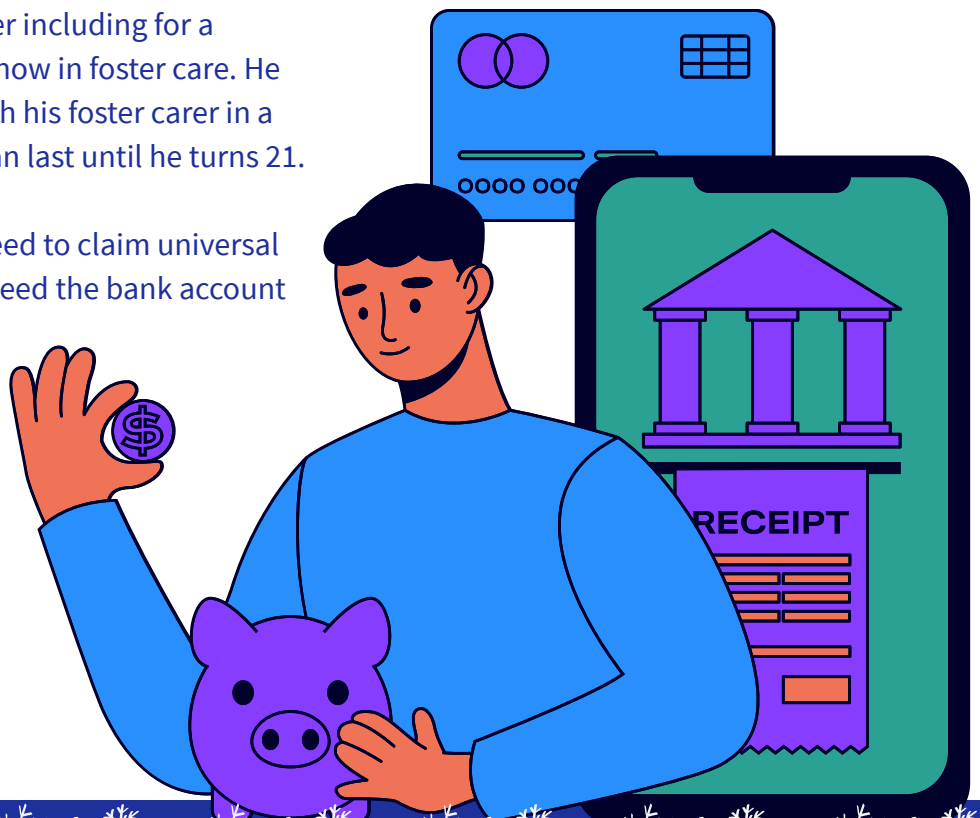
ZAP is also providing tenancy support to eight Care Leavers across the city who are all in Social Housing.

## HSBC No Fixed Address Bank Accounts

The Zone has been an approved referral partner for the scheme since 2021.

ZAP has supported two young people who have been able to open bank accounts in November including for a homeless 17-year-old male who is now in foster care. He turns 18 shortly but will remain with his foster carer in a 'staying put' arrangement which can last until he turns 21.

He is a full-time student and will need to claim universal credit (UC) when he is 18 and will need the bank account to receive his payments. He will become a former relevant Care Leaver at 18.



# BCHA NEWS

## Weekly Football Session at George House

George House is now working in partnership with Devonport House and The Argyle Community Trust to host a weekly football session.

The training session is attended by customers and staff members and has brought real enjoyment, fun and connection for all involved.

One George House customer has also received a letter of thanks recognising her dedication to the sport and her team. We have seen a big change in customer engagement with their Support team, with many relaying the positive effect the training is having on their mental wellbeing.



## Building Relationships

Jason Brownlee, George House's Activities Co-ordinator, has done a great networking piece and has developed professional relationships with a number of organisations.



One new organisation that George House is involved with is "MoonDogz", a non-judgemental and genuine support group, aiming to help the people of Plymouth with their mental health through the provision of kayaking.



CONGRATULATIONS!

## Good news from Somewhere Safe to Stay

A customer at Somewhere Safe To Stay has recently graduated from the University of Plymouth with a degree in Fine Art.



# BCHA NEWS

## Awards & Recognition

Vicky Jennings, Operational Manager, was nominated for “Inspirational Leader of the Year” as part of the Housing Heroes awards, a massive achievement that saw her make it to the shortlisted finalists. The nomination recognised Vicky’s continued passion for her role.

Molly Skill, Operational Manager, was nominated for the Plymouth YMCA Community Employee of the Year Award. This was alongside the George House team also receiving a nomination for the Team of the Year Award.

Both Molly and the George House team were shortlisted as finalists, a real testament to their hard work and dedication to their customers.



## BCHA and Plymouth Community Homes

BCHA are excited to announce that we have secured a new partnership with Plymouth Community Homes.

This has secured 8 additional one bed properties for temporary accommodation for smaller families or individuals experiencing homelessness.



## Partnership Working

Colleagues from BCHA have recently moved to a new office building, named the Unity Hub, in Millbay. BCHA hope that the move will facilitate partnership working between agencies throughout the city. The Citizens Advice Bureau recently held a drop-in service at the Unity Hub, aiming to improve access to the Household Support Fund (Round 7). As a result of the drop-ins, £2,600 of additional financial assistance was identified for the families that attended, reflecting the start of a great partnership both for BCHA and CAB, with further drop-in sessions being planned for the future.



# PATH, TRANSFORMING PLYMOUTH TOGETHER AND PROJECT 58:7

Path and the citywide church network Transforming Plymouth Together (TPT) have come together to launch Project 58:7, a new winter shelter initiative.

The project will transform a network of churches into safe, trauma-informed shelters offering warmth, dignity and support for people sleeping rough across Plymouth during the coldest months of the year. The initiative is funded by The Rank Foundation with support from Plymouth City Council (PCC) and Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of the Alliance system response.

From December through March, centrally located churches will host the shelter on a rotating basis. Each evening, guests will be welcomed through established Alliance referral pathways and the Soup Run, until 10pm.

On arrival, they will be greeted by trained volunteers, coordinated by TPT. Alongside them, experienced Path support workers will manage risk, safeguarding, and any urgent needs.

Once referred, guests will be transported to the churches by minibus, kindly supported by Access Plymouth. On arrival, they will be welcomed with hot drinks, light refreshments, and clean bedding before being offered a calm, safe space to rest. In the morning, Path's Outreach team will provide support sessions so that each person can begin taking meaningful steps away from homelessness.

Victoria Allen, Path CEO, said:

"We see every day the fear, exhaustion and worsening health that comes from trying to survive on the streets. Project 58:7 is a compassionate and practical response, giving people not only a safe night's sleep but the chance to stabilise, feel valued, and begin moving forward."

With Path's three decades of frontline experience, combined with TPT's ability to mobilise churches across Plymouth and the wider support from across the Alliance, the partnership is uniquely placed to deliver a citywide network of safe winter shelters. Together, we aim to offer not only protection from the cold but genuine pathways to improved health, stability and long-term change.



# HAMOAZE HOUSE: CO-DESIGN IN PRACTICE

## Co-Design in Practice: How Hamoaze Community Members Created a Report for Trustees

This year, Hamoaze House has been building a stronger culture of co-design with the people who use the service. The work began with a full-day co-design event in March, where community members, volunteers and staff came together to map what “a good day at Hamoaze” looks like and identify priorities for improvement. Since then, regular update sessions have kept the conversation alive, allowing people to see how their ideas are progressing and to add new insights as the service continues to evolve.



### How the report took shape

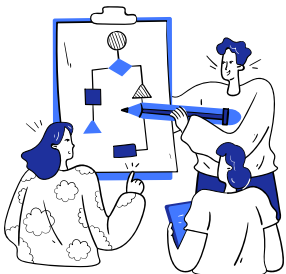
During these ongoing sessions, community members discussed openly what feels supportive, what gets in the way, and what helps them remain engaged throughout the day. The report grew out of these conversations. People highlighted the themes that mattered to them, gathered examples, and refined their thinking collectively.

### A collaborative writing process

Community members drafted the document themselves in a recent workshop. The content, tone, and messages were shaped entirely by those with lived experience. The group were also given anonymous routes of feedback, and final approval of the report. No anonymous feedback was reported with people saying they felt safe to feed back publicly. Photographs of all raw data were kept. What mattered most was ensuring that everyone involved felt represented and that the report spoke with a shared voice.

### Presenting the report

The completed report has now been shared with the Board of Trustees. Trustees welcomed hearing directly from the people who use the service and recognised the value of having a clear, unfiltered account of what supports recovery and belonging. They now expect a similar report every three months for the Board meeting. This completes a 'circuit' between the Trustees of the Charity and the Community we serve.



### Why this matters

This work demonstrates how co-design can be built into day-to-day practice:

- people feel safe to speak honestly;
- progress is visible through regular update sessions;
- leadership gains clear insight grounded in lived experience;
- the community helps shape the ongoing development of their environment.

Hamoaze House will continue to build on this approach, and is open to sharing the method with partners who want to strengthen co-design in their own settings. When people are genuinely involved in shaping their own environments, services become more responsive and more connected to what really helps.

If you would like to read the report, or find out more, including how to implement something like this within your organisation, please contact Hamoaze CEO, Andy Maguire - [amaguire@hamoazehouse.org.uk](mailto:amaguire@hamoazehouse.org.uk)





# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE ALLIANCE

It has been a busy month for workforce development with many opportunities for those working in different parts of the Alliance to learn with and from each other. The following two pages give a flavour of the experiences of three participants.

Mary Coles, Alliance WFD Coordinator

## Wellbeing Champions Training

The Alliance is committed to supporting the health and wellbeing of both our service users and our staff. In November, eight staff members from across the Alliance joined together for two days of training about how we can best support the health and wellbeing of our colleagues. The staff who received the training now go back to their places of work as wellbeing champions.

Please do find out who your wellbeing champions are and go and see them. More information will be given from the Alliance as we each seek to provide support, information and events which will support our valued staff members.



*"I can highly recommend this course, the quality of the training was extremely relevant and we all came away feeling better equipped to promote health and wellbeing in the workplace as well as better looking ourselves."*

Pamela, Salvation Army

Rosanna from Shekinah shared:

*"When Mary sent out an offer of some training for 'Workplace Wellbeing Champions', I put myself forward as it sounded interesting and complemented my current role as part of the Training team in Shekinah. Leading up to the training, I was juggling lots of responsibilities and was slightly regretting the commitment of 2 full days' training as my workload was nagging at me.*



*However, I am SO glad to have put this course to the top of my priority list. It reminded me of all those skills, things I've learned over 6 years of working with Shekinah, that I do for other people naturally, but sometimes neglect to do for myself. I spent time with a great group of other Alliance staff members and we really bonded over our shared learning. From here, I look forward to sharing ideas and resources around Physical and Mental Health and Wellbeing with others – the ripple effect of taking care of myself first is that I can then support others more effectively."*

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE ALLIANCE

## Learning, Connection & Collaboration Across the Alliance by Dionysia Kappa

When I joined The Zone two years ago, understanding the Alliance felt challenging. Today, through regular meetings and training, I've had the chance to meet colleagues from charities and services across Plymouth, learning their roles and seeing how collaboration benefits people experiencing homelessness.

This month, I attended two inspiring events: the Homelessness Partnerships and Pathways Event at Hamoaze House and Two Days of Learning, Connection & Collaboration at Shekinah, organised by Changing Futures and the Alliance.

At Partnerships and Pathways, we heard powerful updates, including that 4,650 households approached Plymouth City Council's Housing Options Team between April 2024 and March 2025, up from 3,949 the previous year - over 400 households every month. These figures highlight the urgency of our work and the importance of partnership.

Leaders from Path, Shekinah, BCHA, and Changing Futures shared plans to make services more accessible, alongside news of additional government funding for homelessness prevention.

The Alliance workforce development trainings were equally impactful. Day one, led by Nica Cornell and Mary Coles, explored intersectionality and inclusive practice, showing how identity shapes experiences of support systems. We learned how we can embed intersectionality into public services through cross-sector training, policy co-design, and inclusive data collection. A model Plymouth could adopt to ensure equity, not just equality.

Day Two focused on competency, values, and collaboration, reminding us that our shared values - humanity, dignity and community - are the foundation of everything we do. Activities helped us reflect on our strengths and celebrate the impact of the Alliance.

Both events reinforced a simple truth: collaboration changes lives. Meeting together, whether for training or networking events, gives us the resilience to tackle complex issues like homelessness and build a Plymouth where everyone belongs.

Dionysia Kappa - The Zone



# VOLUNTEER UPDATES

## Get-Together at Shekinah

There is a Volunteer Get-Together on Thursday 11 December to celebrate their kindness, commitment and hard work. Please contact Rosanna for any further information:  
[rosanna.eveleigh@shekinah.co.uk](mailto:rosanna.eveleigh@shekinah.co.uk)



## A Space to Belong at Harbour

One of Harbour's volunteers has shared their thoughts on the new volunteer space at Harbour:

"There is now a volunteer space where we can sit and base ourselves at Harbour. This is fantastic.

It's helped make me feel more part of Harbour and feel that I am not getting in the way. It's a lovely, welcoming space and I can dump my stuff in there, do some training and be part of a Harbour team. I have managed to complete my SMART training by using the volunteer laptop in our volunteer room. It's really good. I now feel like I belong. Before, I just used to hang about and I felt in the way.

The volunteer room is brilliant and we can meet as a team and feel comfortable. I can also lead the SMART group every week and know that I can leave my bag, coat and laptop in the volunteer room"

## Harbour Volunteers Update

- Four volunteers have found full time employment.
- Five Harbour volunteers have kindly offered to volunteer across the Alliance to assist with clients getting to and from hospital for a lung screen appointments.
- Harbour volunteers are leading the Harbour Warm Welcome Space.
- Harbour volunteers have attend the Partnership and Pathways sessions.
- Harbour volunteers are supporting the new Crack project - called the Wave Project with lived experience input offering advice.
- Over 30 Harbour volunteers have completed their Peer Mentor training with Karl at Shekinah.
- 12 recovery shares have taken place - we aim to hold 40 in light of Harbours 40th.



# GOOD NEWS

## Hamoaze Check-In Evening

This year, Hamoaze House has extended its sense of community into the evenings and weekends — a shift toward becoming a seven-day service. The peer-led SMART Recovery group now meets every Tuesday, offering a calm, supportive space run by people who've walked the same road. On Saturdays, Hamoaze launched a Check-In evening — a shared meal, film, and reflective space for established community members. Both have quickly become highlights of the week: warm, safe settings where people can reconnect, reflect, and rebuild confidence together.



## Donation from Clean Our Patch

Clean Our Patch have generously donated sleeping bags and tents as well as some bags of socks, blankets, gloves, hats, snoods, pillows, hand and feet warmers to Harbour for homeless clients.

Harbour did some litter picking with them as part of their 40th anniversary and they have really supported them since.



A huge thanks to Clean Our Patch!



The Drug Liaison Service has been up and running now for 12 months, great feedback has been received and the service is doing really well and making a difference for both clients and hospital staff.



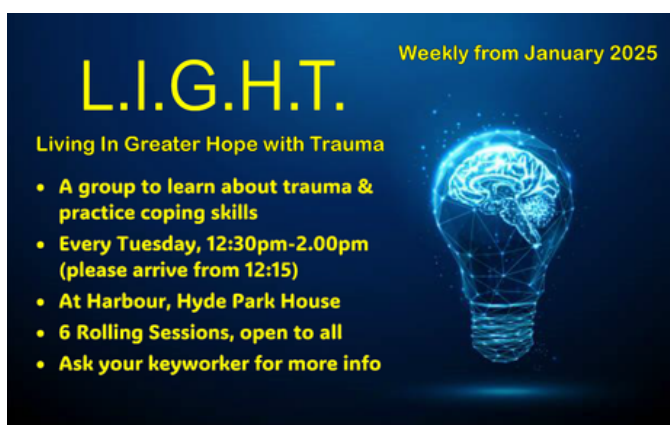
# THE ALLIANCE NOTICE BOARD

## LIGHT Trauma Stabilisation Group

There is no referral needed for the LIGHT trauma stabilisation group: anyone using Alliance services can attend.

The group is facilitated by an experienced team who ensure that attendees do not disclose any details of their personal trauma history, to maintain a safe space for all.

We have had very positive feedback on participant experience of LIGHT which focuses on how we process experiences and learning skills that can help. Please note we are happy for staff to accompany clients if needed.



**L.I.G.H.T.** Weekly from January 2025

Living In Greater Hope with Trauma

- A group to learn about trauma & practice coping skills
- Every Tuesday, 12:30pm-2.00pm (please arrive from 12:15)
- At Harbour, Hyde Park House
- 6 Rolling Sessions, open to all
- Ask your keyworker for more info

The poster features a glowing lightbulb with a brain inside, symbolizing the connection between the mind and the body in trauma recovery.

## Know Your Numbers

Shekinah have the Livewell Southwest 'Know Your Numbers' team coming in on 11 December between 10am and 12pm.

If you're not familiar with Know Your Numbers, it's a quick, 10-minute health check – with no age restrictions and no prior booking needed.

During the session, Livewell practitioners will provide an overview of:

- Weight (kg)
- Body fat % and fat mass
- Muscle mass
- Basal Metabolic Rate (BMR)
- Visceral fat



## Welcoming spaces | PLYMOUTH.GOV.UK

Community organisations, charities, places of worship and libraries are providing warm, safe spaces many offering extras such as free wi-fi, refreshments and activities. Click the link above for more information.

## Shekinah's Christmas Campaign 2025 - Shekinah

Please click  
the link above  
to donate.





# FESTIVE WISHES

Warm festive wishes to all our Alliance colleagues — thank you for your continued partnership, kindness, and commitment to the people and communities we serve together.  
**Hamoaze**

Livewell Alliance services would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Harbour would like to say a big festive thank you to our volunteers! We could not do what we do without them! They are fantastic and do so much for our clients. They selflessly give their time, to support our clients often sharing their own lived experience which offer hope, belief and encouragement.

Thank you for reading The Plymouth Alliance Newsletter, we hope you enjoyed it. If you have any contributions or stories for a future edition, please send to [amy.mackay2@nhs.net](mailto:amy.mackay2@nhs.net)

