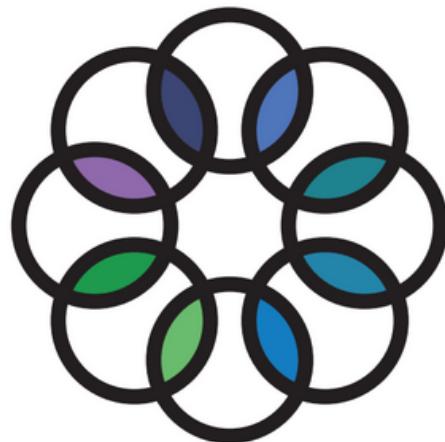




THE PLYMOUTH ALLIANCE



Newsletter - February 2026 edition

Welcome to the latest edition of the Plymouth Alliance Newsletter

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NALOXONE ADVOCATES PLYMOUTH

A Day in the Life of the Naloxone Advocates Plymouth CIC Team

Our day does not begin in an office. It begins with a backpack. Inside are naloxone kits, gloves, wipes, information cards, and a shared belief: everyone deserves the chance to stay alive.

By mid-morning, we are out in the city — hostels, support services, and sometimes the streets and parks where people gather. The first conversations are rarely about naloxone. They are about sleep, food, safety, and what has been happening in someone's life. Trust comes before training.

When naloxone does come up, we explain how it works. We talk through the signs of overdose: slow breathing, blue lips, not waking up. We practise the steps. We laugh sometimes — learning does not have to be frightening. Then we hand over a kit that might one day save a friend, a partner, or a stranger.

Some days are quiet. Others are not.

If you need us to, we will sit with you while an ambulance is called. We will support you as you try to stay calm after using naloxone for the first time. We will be there to watch relief spread across a face as a person returns. These moments stay with us — and hopefully, they are rare, and when they do arise, no one faces them alone.

But our work is not only crisis response. Much of it is about dignity: listening without judgement, offering harm reduction advice, and reminding people they matter — even when the world has told them otherwise.

We also hear something else, often. "It's amazing what you're doing." "I'm glad you're here." Those words matter. They remind us that this work is seen.

In the afternoon, we might run a small group session with staff or volunteers, showing how simple and safe naloxone is to use. Many are surprised. Almost all leave saying, "I wish I'd known this sooner."

Before heading home, we restock our bags. Kits given out. Contacts made. Lives possibly saved.



We do not always see the outcomes. But we know this: every conversation is a chance. Every kit is hope in a small box. Every peer is proof that community care works.

We know this because we have lived it. This is Naloxone Advocates Plymouth CIC, day to day.

Not dramatic. Not heroic. Just people helping people come back and respond again.



The Plymouth Alliance

ALLIANCE INTRODUCTION SESSIONS 2026

These sessions will provide an overview of the Alliance and its history. We will introduce the principal partners and some of the people working here to explore the philosophy behind the Alliance.



“It was really constructive for everyone from the Alliance to come together and share our thoughts and views.”

Attendee, Dec 2025

Who Should Attend?

The sessions are open to all staff, including volunteers.

It's a great event for new starters. It is also useful for those who have been in post for a while to hear about the history of the Alliance and get a "helicopter view" of Alliance services.

Dates and Location



Monday 2 March, Harbour
9:30am - 11:30am



Monday 1 June, Harbour
9:30am - 11:30am



Monday 7 September, Harbour
9:30am - 11:30am



Monday 7 December, Harbour
9:30am - 11:30am



PLYMOUTH
CITY COUNCIL

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

For more information or to book a place, contact amy.mackay2@nhs.net

BCHA NEWS

Collaborative Working

Citizens Advice held a drop-in session at BCHA's Somewhere Safe to Stay (SSTS) following the success of the drop in at the Unity Hub. The drop in, held on the 12 January, helped secure financial help for BCHA's service users at SSTS.

In January, the Families team and two of BCHA's Housing team at Unity Hub welcomed colleagues from Trevi and Plymouth City Council to discuss the new offer of an Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) dedicated to Service Personnel and those connected to Service Personnel. The teams were also updated on all of the services available to women fleeing domestic abuse within Plymouth.

Good News

A member of the Families Team, Claire Chilcott, has been successful with securing a family holiday for one of her service users, M. Claire applied for funding through the Family Holiday Charity in August of last year and in January was told M had been successful. M was able to choose his holiday destination, the accommodation and the dates they would like to go away. The charity has also contributed £60 in supermarket vouchers to cover food for the duration of their 4-night stay.

Seven people who use services at George House are due to go into drug and alcohol treatment, accessed via the drug and alcohol pathway built between George House and adult social care.



Development News



Local Authority Housing Fund Round (LAHF) 3

14 family homes to be purchased off the market for Afghan families (6) and families owed a homelessness duty (8). As of January, 8 homes have been purchased and 7 are now occupied. The remaining 6 properties are due to be complete before April.

Sherford PH1B

15 new-build family homes are currently being purchased in Sherford, including 11 for social rent and 4 for shared ownership. BCHA hope the rented homes will be ready to let by mid-February with the shared ownership homes expected to be occupied by May.

INDIVIDUAL PLACEMENT AND SUPPORT (IPS) - RYAN'S STORY

Ryan sought the support of the Individual Placement and Support (IPS) programme after a period out of work. He had faced personal and employment barriers and was determined to return to the workforce. From the outset, Ryan demonstrated a strong motivation to build a sustainable career, especially within the construction sector, with help from his support coordinator. He set clear goals to increase his employability and practical skills.

Ryan knew that gaining his CSCS card would be a critical first step, which he gained at a local training academy. The hands-on experience gave Ryan a clear understanding of life on a construction site and strengthened his confidence in his own abilities. Armed with this knowledge, he went on to successfully pass his CSCS test.

Motivated to improve his prospects even further, Ryan committed himself to additional training. He completed courses in Asbestos Awareness, Confined Space Working, Working at Heights, and Fire Safety Awareness, significantly strengthening his employability. His commitment and growing skill set were clear, and it was time to connect him with the right employer.



Shekinah's IPS Programme has been an excellent partner for Willmott Dixon. Their caseworker shared Ryan's CV with our labour supply agency, Sphere Solutions, who are providing the workforce for the Emergency Care Building project at Derriford Hospital. They were impressed by both his qualifications and his attitude, and Ryan was offered a labouring position. While waiting for this position, Sphere placed Ryan on short assignments to build experience and demonstrate his reliability.

Today, Ryan is thriving in employment and looking ahead with confidence. Perhaps most inspiring of all, he is now keen to support others who may be facing similar challenges. By sharing his story, he hopes to show that with the right support, strong partnerships, and personal determination, meaningful and lasting change is possible.

Ryan's journey is a powerful example of what can be achieved when employment support services, training providers, and employers work together, not just to place someone in a job, but to help them build a future.

"Ryan is a joy to work with, helpful, reliable and always willing to go above and beyond. We wish we had 10 Ryan's working on site with us, he will go further in the construction industry and we recognise his potential!"

Simon Whittingham,
Senior Operations Manager, Willmott Dixon

"Ryan has consistently demonstrated real dedication to achieving long-term employment. He has fully committed himself to building his skills and creating a better future, and it has been fantastic to see him settle into work he genuinely enjoys."

Esme Curtis,
Employment Specialist of Shekinah

NEWS FROM HARBOUR

Harbour's Drug Liaison Service

At Harbour, we believe that every person has a fundamental right to access health care. It is widely acknowledged that people experiencing dependence face many barriers to doing so proactively. Many are too afraid to reveal their substance use to medical professionals for fear of bias or being treated differently. Some leave hospital in frustration without receiving vital, sometimes life-saving, treatment and care.

That is why, in November 2024, we were proud to launch a new Drugs Liaison Service at Derriford Hospital. We have successfully placed two Substance Misuse Workers to support the NHS and the Health Inclusion Pathway at Derriford.

From data analysed between November 24 and February 2025, the hospital team received 302 referrals. Of these, 289 patients were seen and supported, and 128 new opiate substitution treatments were initiated. By undertaking rapid assessments, delivering brief interventions, providing harm-reduction advice, and making referrals into ongoing support while patients are in hospital, we have demonstrated improved hospital experiences and better long-term health outcomes.

Success Story: John

John arrived at the Emergency Department experiencing homelessness, severe pain, and a serious infection caused by long-term IV drug use. He was unwell with sepsis and anxious about remaining in hospital due to fears of withdrawal, having not been on a stable opioid substitution therapy (OST) prescription for many years.

With support from the Drugs Liaison Service, John was offered the opportunity to begin OST in hospital in line with The Management of Opiate Withdrawal Policy. He agreed, and the liaison team worked closely with medical staff to ensure John felt supported and safe enough to stay and receive treatment.

Alongside medical care, John received practical and emotional support. He was provided with fresh clothes, toiletries, and activities, and was visited daily by the liaison team and provided extra pastoral care facilitated by Harbour's Volunteer Team. John had no visitors and shared that he was a veteran, making the consistent presence of staff especially meaningful. During daily check-ins, the team offered brief interventions, harm-reduction advice, and explored future options with him, including community services such as Hamoaze, Harbour, 12-step programmes, veteran support networks, and access to needle exchange services.

John remained in hospital for several weeks and described feeling stable for the first time in a long time. As his physical health improved, so did his confidence and motivation. He recognised the benefits of stabilisation and understood that continuing treatment was vital to prevent further serious health complications.

NEWS FROM HARBOUR

Before discharge, the Drugs Liaison Workers supported John to continue his OST in the community through rapid prescribing at Harbour. He also engaged with housing support via BCHA and was provided with temporary accommodation on discharge.

John left hospital not only medically stable, but with ongoing treatment in place, secure temporary housing, and active connections to community and veteran support services. This intervention marked a turning point for John, offering stability, hope, and a realistic pathway towards long-term recovery.

The service also works with patients from Devon and Cornwall by liaising with With You and Together. They sadly see many people suffering from the effects of ketamine, cocaine, and spice misuse—many of them young people—as well as those admitted following overdose. The team ensures patients feel supported and understood during their admissions, checks for adverse reactions that reflect the growing epidemic of synthetic drugs in the South West, provides harm-reduction advice, and signposts individuals to further help.

Where appropriate, the liaisons can suggest toxicology testing and advocate for naloxone to be included in patients' take-home medications.



The Drugs Liaison Service plays a key role in early engagement, connecting with individuals at crisis points where motivation for change is often high. Their responsive, trauma-informed approach supports people to access the right help at the right time. The service acts as a vital bridge between hospital care and the wider community treatment system.

Harbour Heights Climbing Sessions

Harbour have completed 3 sessions at the Climbing Hanger with people who use services.

Feedback from those who have attended has been fantastic. Once participants have been inducted (about 15 mins) they are free to try the various panels (walls).

Everyone appeared to have a lot of fun and surprised themselves!



RENTERS RIGHT ACT

The Private Rented Access Service (PRAS) at Path supports people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to access and sustain private rented accommodation, including helping with Deposit Guarantees.

Path has been involved in private rented access work in Plymouth for over 30 years, and PRAS is informed by longstanding knowledge of the local market and established relationships with landlords.

If you're working with someone who is ready to rent privately but needs support to secure a property—such as a deposit guarantee—please contact: Shirley.johns@pathdevon.org. We'll also be visiting agencies soon to share information about the service and answer any questions.

As you'd expect, we've been monitoring the Renters Rights Act closely and have included a short summary below. We'll add this new legislation into the content of our Tenancy Training, with dates being announced shortly.

Renter Rights Act

The Renters Rights Act begins to come in to effect from the 1 May 2026. The aims of the Act are to make the private rented sector more stable and secure for tenants, improve the quality of accommodation, clarify the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants, and reduce discrimination.

Key Points (from 1 May 2026)

- There will be no more section 21 eviction notices
- Landlords will need to give a reason to evict a tenant using a section 8 notice
- Tenants will need to give 2 months' notice when they want to leave the property
- All private rented tenancies will change from 'assured shorthold' tenancies to 'assured' tenancies
- All tenancies will be 'periodic' from the start rather than for a fixed period
- Tenants will be able to request having a pet and a landlord will need to consider the request
- There are changes to how landlords increase rent
- Landlords will not be able to require that rent in advance is paid prior to the tenancy being signed
- There are measures to reduce discrimination
- There are transitional arrangements for existing tenancies



There will be other changes in the future including a database of landlords, Ombudsman, and a decent homes standard but it may be several years before those changes come into effect. There have already been changes to the enforcement powers of Local Authorities.

RENTERS RIGHT ACT

Information for Tenants and Landlords

Tenants should initially have a conversation with their landlord or Letting Agency if they are worried about any of these changes and how it might affect them but overall, this is positive for existing tenants. Tenants can also get advice from Shelter, Citizens Advice and other support services. South West Landlords Association can provide advice to landlords and have been running training sessions.

Opinion

Path fully supports the abolition of Section 21 and the wider aims of the Renters Reform Act. But we're concerned about more landlords exiting the market and those that remain applying stricter referencing requirements and avoiding applicants they perceive as higher risk. This will make it even harder for many of the people we support to secure a tenancy. We're also cautious that shifting to Section 8 evictions, could lead to more tenants being found Intentionally Homeless and therefore not able to get statutory support. We're hopeful that further guidance from Government over the coming months will allay these concerns.

Dave Ringwood - Path



Links for further information

[Guide to the Renters' Rights Act - GOV.UK](#)

[The Renters' Rights Act - Shelter England](#)

[The Renters' Rights Act – The Timeline - South West Landlords Association](#)

[Renters' Rights Act: guidance for local authorities and councils - GOV.UK](#)

THE ALLIANCE IN ACTION

(Q2) JULY - SEPT 2025

893

prescriptions were
prescribed inhouse by
Livewell.



3892 people who
services were
open collectively to services each
month (on average).

320 people who use services
left the system in a
planned way (excluding
brief interventions).

58

people who use
services moved
on into private
rented
accommodation.


45 people who use services
were seen at homeless
drop in clinics by the
complex needs team.

44%
of people who use services
at Harbour showed
substantial progress.


1493

people who use services
were supported to maintain
their accommodation
(homeless prevention).

60 16/17 year olds were
accommodated.
19 were S20, 5 were S17 and
36 were care leavers.

350

Young people were
seen in the young
people's hub.

30

Rough sleepers
were
accommodated.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE ALLIANCE

Articulating the role of workforce development is never straight forward. There is a clear requirement for integrated, flexible and trauma informed services across housing and health. A learning culture where those involved feel empowered to experiment with new approaches and collectively learn from experiences, including mistakes made. Multi-agency development opportunities will enable a joined up approach to working, creating a shared understanding and collaborative response.

The following provides a snapshot of the main Alliance workforce development activities taking place.

The **Alliance Introduction Sessions** provide an overview of the Alliance and its history, exploring the philosophy behind the Alliance and 'the case for change'.

The prime function is **Partnership & Pathways in Multiple Disadvantage** is to facilitate a joined up approach to work. Each session is linked to a theme: substance use, housing, mental health and domestic abuse. Attendance is encouraged from a diverse mix of expertise and experience, in order to foster a spirit of collaboration and deep partnership working.



Partnership & Pathways in Multiple Disadvantage EXTRA! is an additional workshop to increase awareness of LDIS (Local Drug Information System) and PORT (Plymouth Overdose Response Team) and other harm reduction priorities.

Alliance Learning & Reflective Sessions - What helps people feel safe enough to connect, relate, belong, heal and recover? This learning and reflection series offer a gentle blend of learning and reflective practice, creating space to think, feel, and make meaning together with colleagues working across multiple disadvantage. There are four individual sessions based on the themes of: Safety, Connection, Relationship and Belonging.

JOIN US

INTERESTED IN ATTENDING
PARTNERSHIPS AND
PATHWAYS OR AN
ALLIANCE INTRODUCTION
SESSION?

Sign up information for Partnerships and Pathways is available in this newsletter on pages 13 and 14.

Alliance Introduction Session information is on page 3.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE ALLIANCE

Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) courses are planned for June and September, Alliance funded services remain a priority for the city.

Managing Dual Diagnosis Training - Harbour and Livewell Community Substance Use Service have combined their expertise to deliver a session on mental health & substance use through the 'Develop' platform.



Collaboration with the VAWG/DASV team from Plymouth City Council continues to address gaps in up to date knowledge and understanding, and foster closer relationships between the Alliance and VAWG/DASV services by pooling resources to host four workshops on the topic of 'Power & Privilege'. This complements the core Domestic Abuse training offer.

Meghan and Mary at the Power & Privilege Workshop - photo by Emma Cox from BCHA.

Mary's recent WFD highlights include:

Dartmoor Temperate Rainforest Inspired Model of Leadership

After conversations and email correspondence with Verity from the VAWG/DASV team, we found the courage to share a Dartmoor Temperate Rainforest Inspired Model of leadership, system and individual learning/growth/change with the Changing Futures Plymouth team, which was well received. This model is an invitation to reflect on:

- A stewardship concept of leadership
- What we can learn from the Dartmoor temperate rainforest about creating the healthy system conditions for sustainable and relational learning/change/growth in a variable climate
- Using the visual metaphor of a tree within the rainforest for individual and collective learning and development.

An overall impression of the willingness of the workforce to fully participate and share experiences in meetings and workshops. We can find ourselves exploring challenging and nuanced topics, which may require us to consider multiple truths and conflicting priorities.

Wellbeing Champions

The first meeting of the Alliance's wellbeing champion network where ideas, contacts and expertise were shared by colleagues from Shekinah, Salvation Army, Livewell Southwest and PATH.

Multiple Disadvantage Forum 2026

PARTNERSHIPS AND PATHWAYS

Join us to learn more about partner agencies and the services they provide, strengthen existing connections, cultivate new relationships and support a collective learning culture between teams and organisations working in the area of multiple disadvantage.

This session is open to all who contribute to the work of the Alliance, including those working for partner agencies and volunteers. To book, first get manager approval and click the date below to register via Eventbrite.

Substance Use

Thursday 26 February

1:30pm - 4pm
Shekinah,
Stonehouse Creek

“
I found the group activity the most useful... it allows you to engage with people from other organisations.

Housing and Homelessness

Thursday 5 March

1:30pm - 4pm
Shekinah,
Stonehouse Creek



VAWG/ DASV

Thursday 23 April

1:30pm - 4pm
Shekinah,
Stonehouse Creek

“
...Networking with other agencies and finding out more about their services.

Mental Health

Thursday 2 April

1:30pm - 4pm
Shekinah,
Stonehouse Creek



The Plymouth Alliance

For further info, please scan the
QR code or contact
amy.mackay2@nhs.net.



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

EXTRA!

Multiple Disadvantage Forum 2026

PARTNERSHIPS AND PATHWAYS

Join us for a special addition to the Partnership and Pathways Multiple Disadvantage Forum where we will explore identified harm reduction priorities and co-produce actions.

This session will cover:

- Local Drug Information System (LDIS)
- Plymouth Overdose Response Team (PORT)
- Naloxone Advocates Plymouth (NAP)
- Needle and Syringe Programmes (NSP)



This is a targeted workshop for partners who wish to explore their approach to harm reduction and co-create possible solutions.

For further info, please contact
amy.mackay2@nhs.net

Harm Reduction

Tuesday 3 March
10am - 1pm
Harbour, Hyde Park House



This session is open to all who contribute to the work of the Alliance, including those working for partner agencies and volunteers.

To book, first get manager approval and click the date to register via Eventbrite.



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



The Plymouth Alliance

SUBGROUP SPOTLIGHT - TREATMENT SUBGROUP

The Treatment Subgroup has been working on several key areas to strengthen support and improve outcomes:

Dual Diagnosis Strategy

A draft strategy was presented, focusing on reducing drug-related deaths, improving practitioner knowledge, and embedding a “no wrong front door” approach to ensure accessible support for all.

Recovery and Inclusion

Discussions at Treatment subgroup have highlighted the need for more inclusive recovery groups and systemic adjustments to better support neurodiverse clients. A successful summer activity pilot with Harbour and Hamoaze for children of parents affected by substance use has received positive feedback.

Workforce Development

A pilot of peer-led reflective practice is underway which has been co-designed with the workforce as a part of a menu of offers available to staff. Trauma-informed practice is embedded with over 5,000 people trained citywide. Forty colleagues from Alliance partners have attended the 4-day Trauma Stabilisation Training. A proposal for structured Team Around Me (TAM) implementation to enhance collaboration across services is also being developed.

Best Practice Spotlight

Naloxone distribution in hospitals has been noted as an emerging best practice to improve safety and outcomes.



THE ALLIANCE NOTICE BOARD



The Speakeasy Murder
Saturday 16th May 2026
Doors open at 6:30 PM - event runs late
The Treasury, Catherine Street, Plymouth
£55 per person
includes 3-course meal + prosecco on arrival
Tables of 2, 4, or 6 available

Book your tickets now:
daniela.austin@shekinah.co.uk
www.shekinah.co.uk

Path is inviting supporters, volunteers, and runners of all abilities to join Team Path Power at the Run Plymouth Festival on Sunday 17 May, taking on either the Half Marathon or 10k.

It's a powerful way to run with purpose — representing Path while helping to change lives. After an incredible event last year, we're aiming to make this year even bigger, and the impact you can make for people experiencing homelessness is significant.

As a Team Path Power runner, you'll receive 50% off your race place, an exclusive Path running vest or t-shirt, training tips, encouragement and fundraising support, plus an invitation to a Team Path Power runners' event in March. Be part of something powerful. Be part of Team Path Power.

To sign up visit <https://tinyurl.com/PathDevonPHM>

Shekinah are excited to share something a little different with you this year. Instead of their annual ball, they are hosting their first ever Murder Mystery Night – Speakeasy Murder, set in the glamorous world of the 1920s.

The event will take place on 16th May at The Treasury and promises to be a fantastic evening.

Guests will enjoy:

- A glass of prosecco on arrival
- A delicious three course meal
- And of course... a murder to solve

There are only 40 tickets available, so don't snooze for too long!



Plymouth Half Marathon & 10k
Sunday 17th May 2026

POWER UP
for **path**

Sign up for
50%
Entry

Help us End Homelessness in Plymouth

Limited spaces so sign up today!
pathdevon.org/plymouth-half-marathon

Char. No. 1053772

