

Summer Edition July 2025 Issue Number 85

Coalition News



Contents

- Welcome
- Technology Update
- Mental Health Update
- Get More Active Update
- Involvement Update
- Events
- Contact Us

Nikki's Letter



Dear Members,

I hope you're enjoying the Summer. Personally it has been a little too hot for me on some days but I am grateful for the longer days. We have made the most of the longer days at The Coalition with lots of activities and meet ups. It's been great to see so many of you at sailing, Hampton Court and I'm looking forward to joining in the karate session and the Superhero Tri that are happening in August.

The Tech team have made their presence known in Woking, with lots of referrals flying in! We're so excited to be back in Woking again.

The mental health team have been busy running the Independent Mental Health Network meetings as well as the FoCUS meetings to ensure that services in Surrey are meeting the needs of the people that use them!

The involvement team have been carrying out lots of access visits too. They make such a difference, I am super proud of the work that has been carried out at Pierrepont Farm in Frensham. More on this later in the issue.

And we now have the option for people to be able to donate to the charity much more easily! We're also going to run our first ever raffle, there are lots of fantastic prizes.

Finally, a little update to say that I'm going to be staying in my role as CEO at The Coalition for the time being. I look forward to catching up with you over the coming months.

Enjoy the rest of the Summer, Nikki

Technology Update



Continued Growth and Engagement in Woking

We've had a really busy couple of months in Woking, with referrals flowing in and long-standing partners re-engaging with our services. Our Outreach Officer, Attia, has been out and about, attending events and building strong connections with partners.

We're really happy to welcome two new Tech Angels in Woking, and with GP practices now referring patients to us, we're exploring the exciting possibility of hosting NHS App events in local surgeries. These sessions will help residents download, verify, and navigate the App.

New Funding for NHS App Workshops in Epsom & Ewell

Thanks to additional funding, we're launching a series of NHS App workshops across four GP surgeries in Epsom and Ewell. These sessions will provide follow-up support to our Tech Members afterwards too.

Digital Inclusion Meets Sustainability

Surrey County Council (SCC) has approached us about recycling surplus SCC laptops - something that sounds like an exciting collaboration! The plan? Refurbish them with Google Chrome OS and offer them to Tech Angels for distribution to our Tech Members. It's a sustainable solution to digital exclusion - reducing waste and empowering lives, one device at a time.

Volunteers' Week Celebration

To celebrate Volunteer's Week, we collaborated with Voluntary Action South West Surrey (VASWS) for a historic walk through Godalming on Tuesday, June 4th. It was a great opportunity for our Tech Angels to spend some time with other volunteers.

Spotlight Story: Susette's Digital Journey.

At our recent community event at Boxhill Village Hall on 16th May, we had the pleasure of reconnecting with Susette, a 71-year-old resident of Mole Valley, who joined the Coalition back in September 2024 after meeting our team at a local outreach event.

When we first met Susette, she had no Wi-Fi or landline at home and relied on an old pay as you go mobile phone. We loaned her a Lenovo tablet and MIFI device with six months of data, and she received six support sessions from Tech Angel Rob.

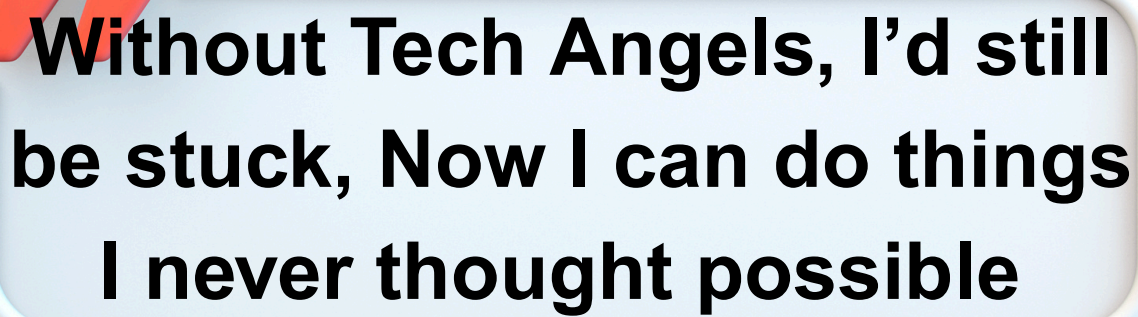
Susette was eager to share how much her confidence and skills have grown. “I’ve really surprised myself,” she said. “I’ve always been really rubbish at everything.” Her proudest achievement? Completing her first online grocery shop independently - something she once thought impossible.

Living in a remote area and managing osteoarthritis, Susette used to depend on costly ready meals that often went to waste. Now, she can order exactly what she needs - saving money and reducing food waste. She continues to refer to the notes she made during Rob’s sessions and is remembering more each day.

Beyond practical benefits, the experience has been emotionally rewarding. Viewing precious photos of her late mother on a larger screen has brought her joy, and she’s now exploring ways to share her artwork with a local group, opening up new opportunities for connection.

Susette has chosen to keep her tablet and MiFi, arranging a new data plan with Rob’s help. She also received assistance from the Household Support Fund, and expressed deep gratitude for the support she’s received: “The Coalition has helped me more than I can say”





**Without Tech Angels, I'd still
be stuck, Now I can do things
I never thought possible**

The Tech Team have now completed their work in Runnymede. The team delivered a hugely successful project helping people who are digitally excluded. During the project we received 47 referrals, with 40 participants meeting the eligibility criteria and actively engaging in the programme.

The team issued 32 devices, including 17 tablets and 2 smartphones to help with Tech Members accessing technology. Throughout the project, we conducted 94 visits to Runnymede Tech Members.

Our dedicated 7 Tech Angels provided a total of 8,013 minutes (approximately 133.5 hours) of digital training and support. A huge thank you to our Tech Angel volunteers for all your time and help with this project!

The training sessions covered essential digital skills, including:

- Password recovery
- Email usage
- Downloading and setting up applications
- Organising a home screen
- Signing up for and using the NHS app
- Accessing NHS appointments
- Using BBC apps, including iPlayer
- Charging a phone, making/receiving calls, and sending/receiving texts
- Adding and deleting contacts
- Renewing internet connection
- Using a Highway Code application

The Runnymede Tech Angels project successfully helped individuals with digital skills, leading to greater independence and better job opportunities. By addressing barriers to IT access and providing hands on training, we made a huge impact.

A big thank you to Runnymede Borough Council for supporting this work.

Mental Health Update



Swimming and Sailing Wellbeing Events

Our Wellbeing Get Together for March was a trip to Surrey Sports Park in Guildford to join the Dolphins swimming group.

We've also been back to Papercourt Lake for our May Wellbeing Get Together. It was a beautiful day full of sunshine and smiles. More on this later in this issue.

Looking ahead into the summer months we will be holding an accessible martial arts session in Godalming in August. If you are interested in attending please let Katy or Guy know.

Working with Surrey County Council

The Independent Mental Health Network (IMHN) completed work on two projects with Surrey County Council last month. Both were coproduced with people with lived experience of using their services, one was working on a five year strategy for the council's mental health team to continue to develop their services.

The other project focused on the development of their Housing Protocol for mental health, which by strengthening coordination between health, social care and housing, aims to help people find accommodation to aid their recovery and reduce the risk of becoming homeless. The protocol sets out step-by-step guidance to services, will also help prevent delays in people leaving hospital and free up hospital space for others in need



Talking Mental Health Newsletter

The spring copy of our Talking Mental Health newsletter was released, please have a look through it to read more about what our mental health team have been doing this Spring. You can read it here: [TALKING MENTAL HEALTH NEWSLETTER](#)

Independent Mental Health Network Update

The IMHN coordinating meeting was held at the end of May, we had an interesting meeting looking at the welfare benefits concerns

At the end of July we will hold our next meeting which will cover internal IMHN business such as reviewing the member meeting rules and the announcement of our new chair and vice-chair of the IMHN, nominations have been taken from members for each position throughout June and we have 2 nominations for each role – voting will happen in July.

FoCUS Meetings

If you're not able to join one of our FoCUS meeting we'd still love to hear about your experiences using Surrey and Borders NHS Foundation Trust mental health services. You can share your experiences by filling out our 'question of the quarter' form which you can find through this link: <https://forms.office.com/e/89UNwe7ugn>

Come and see us

Our team will be attending the Surrey Hills Wellfest at De Vere Horsley Towers on Sunday 27th July 10am – 6pm. Drop in and have a chat with our staff if you will be attending the event.

Join the Independent Mental Health Network

Would you like to be part of the IMHN? A network of people (18 years +) that have lived experience of mental ill health or care for somebody with mental ill health. Contact Guy if you'd like to get involved.

FUNDRAISING UPDATE



At the beginning of 2025, we were pleased to welcome Rachel Roberts to The Coalition, our new Fundraising Lead. Many of you that have met her will know that she is passionate about fundraising and making a difference to communities of people that need help. In 2019, Rachel co-founded a voluntary 'Good Neighbours' Scheme in Godalming, setting up a scheme for residents primarily to provide lifts to hospitals and medical appointments. The scheme was awarded 'The Certificate of Appreciation' from The Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey for services to the community of Godalming during Covid.

As a mum of two boys, she has tirelessly fundraised for the PTA at their schools: whether that's walking up and down the local high street asking for raffle prizes, putting marketing flyers through doors to sell Christmas trees or spending her evenings filling bags of sweets for the summer fete. She likes to get involved!

Outside of work and volunteering, Rachel loves a fundraising challenge, and has run the London and New York marathons, completed the 3 Peaks Challenge and cycled from London to Brighton - raising thousands of pounds of charity. Having survived cancer in 2015, she is committed to supporting Macmillan and combines her love of baking with hosting a coffee morning every year.



Raffle

Save the date, Friday 7th November, for the first ever Surrey Coalition Raffle! We are currently beavering away gathering some amazing prizes for our first ever Coalition raffle! In order to be kinder to the environment, the raffle will be drawn online, and all proceeds will go to the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People.

New funding

We are pleased to announce that we have received funding from Surrey County Council to provide disability awareness training for 8 foodbanks in Surrey.

Calling all online shoppers!

If you haven't signed up already, please do give Easyfundraising a go. I promise you it's really easy to sign up and you will help raise funds for the Coalition. Over 8,000 brands will donate whilst you shop as normal (Sainsburys, Morrisons, M&S, Debenhams, Boots, John Lewis and many more) All you need to do is click this link, [Fundraising_|_Charity Fundraising Online | You Spend Online, Brands Donate | Easyfundraising](#) allow 5 minutes to register and then always shop by going in via the Easyfundraising App. Any questions, please email me Rachel at rachel.roberts@surreycoalition.org.uk

Since we launched Easyfundraising in January last year, we have raised nearly £400 - which would pay for one month of our online activities, such as Glee Club, the Quiz and our two virtual Cafes.

**It's now really easy to donate to us
online...**

Get More Active Update



Coalition and IMHN members have been enjoying the beautiful weather and Surrey countryside at our latest Wellbeing Get Together. We were back at Papercourt Sailing Club in Ripley for the Sailability session. Once again this was a popular activity with 13 members attending supported by Coalition staff. We didn't have to worry about the weather this year, it was the perfect balance of sunshine and breeze that meant great conditions for sailing!

Papercourt Sailability is run by knowledgeable and helpful volunteers every other weekend over the summer. There are plenty of accessible options to get out on the water. For those that prefer to access a boat directly from land there is the Wheels on Water boat. This is a motorised boat that you can walk or wheel directly on to. Two members chose this option and were soon enjoying the wind in their hair as they powered around the lake.

The dual access dinghies are accessed from a jetty with plenty of support from volunteers and a hoist if needed. These are sailed alongside a volunteer with the opportunity to do some of the sailing yourself and over time work towards a qualification if you want. Five of our members chose this option, and all enjoyed an exhilarating trip with the only downside being that it was over too quickly!

Everyone else took a trip on the crabber "Lady Jay" which is also accessed from the jetty. It was lovely to see everyone's smiles when they returned and hear about how relaxing and enjoyable they had found the activity. If you'd like to try out sailing for yourself there is no need to book – just turn up during one of the session times. All sessions are free of charge – just bring a donation if you would like to try some of the homemade cakes on offer.

All smiles at the London marathon



Megan and Katy from The Coalition team complete London Marathon!

We're very proud to share that Megan and Katy from The Coalition team completed the London Marathon! Massive congratulations to them both and thank you for fundraising for The Coalition! Megan has shared with us her experience of the London Marathon and also about the fantastic accessibility at the event.

On Sunday 27th April I took part in the London Marathon alongside Katy who kindly agreed to be my support runner. I completed the entire 26.2 miles self-propelling in my manual wheelchair. I am also visually impaired (tunnel vision) and so Katy warned me about obstacles such as upcoming turns, potholes, and other hazards in the road.

Many of the roads were on a camber which meant that to keep myself straight I could only push with my left arm which was exhausting! Uphill sections were also quite challenging, but this was made up for on the downhill when I could rest a little.



The atmosphere was incredible and kept me pushing forward when things were tough. Our total finish time was 6 hours 51 minutes and 26 seconds, and our fundraising total for the coalition (including gift aid) was just over £2,000! I am over the moon with this result.

I was really impressed with the overall accessibility of the event. I received a guaranteed place as part of their Disability 200 project, which reserved 200 places for participants with a disability on a first come first served basis. I also received a free place for my support runner.

At the start line, we were able to wait in the access tent which had direct access to two mobile changing places toilets and around a dozen or so additional wheelchair accessible Portaloo's. There were also accessible toilets at every even mile along the marathon route.

The thing that made the biggest difference to me was being able to reserve blue badge parking at the start and finish line so that I didn't have the additional stress of navigating public transport, which will have been very busy! I had zero energy left at the end so being able to get straight in the car was invaluable.

There was also a sensory calm space at the finish line for anyone who needed to take a moment away from the crowds and noise, I thought this was a fantastic idea as it was all a tad overwhelming!

I am feeling very proud of myself for this achievement. When I first became a wheelchair user, I struggled to push myself to the local shops and back, so to have now completed an entire marathon shows just how far I've come, and I would absolutely do it again

Calling all those that like a sporting challenge!

Inspired by Megan and Katy's amazing marathon achievement, we are entering a Coalition team into the Surrey Half Marathon next year on 22nd March 2026. If you are interested in taking part or just registering your interest, please contact Rachel at rachel.roberts@surreycoalition.org.uk

Involvement Update



Hate Crime

The Coalition hosted a Hate Crime Panel on 12th June - The focus of this panel was to hear from Disabled People and people living with long term health conditions about their experiences of engaging with Surrey Police. The Surrey Police team also spoke to our members about the development of a new hate crime strategy. We look forward to working with Surrey Police in the future.

Campaigns

Our Campaigns Committee has been very focused on the Government Welfare Reform Green Paper. The IMHN have also provided their input into the response. We submitted our response to the consultation in June. Megan ran a peer support sessions on possible benefit changes because of the welfare reform green paper and their possible impact. We have since heard from the government that there have been some changes to the proposals. We'll continue to monitor the situation and work with the campaigns committee.

Engagement with people with learning disabilities in East Surrey

Alex is in the beginning stages of a research project to understand more about the health and social care experience for people with learning disabilities in East Surrey. If you or anybody you know would like to get involved, please do contact the involvement team.



Disabled Parking Spaces in Surrey

Yasmin and one of our members were filmed by the BBC on issues with disabled parking spaces in Surrey. Whilst they were filming, a non-Blue Badge car was parked in a Disabled car parking space at our member's dentist which clearly showed the impact that this can have on Disabled people.

Access visits

Jennie attended two launch events, Leith Hill Place's Rail to Ramble in Dorking and Pierrepont Farm in Frensham. Our members helped review the access and made suggested improvements to these sites. Outdoor paths, access and disabled parking which have now been implemented. There was a lot of publicity around this which is good for the Coalition.

Disability Awareness Training for trainee GPs

Megan and Nikki gave a very successful Disability awareness session to trainee GPs. This is the second session that The Coalition have run and we're hoping to deliver more in the future.

Did you know that we need to re-apply for and raise £850,000 each year to keep our services running?

Now that we are a registered charity, you or one of your family members can help us by signing up to regularly donate by direct debit to the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People. We know that not everybody will be able to help, however, no matter how big or small your donation is, it will help us to continue providing free services for our members. And, just by being a member, joining in with activities and telling other people about The Coalition contributes to our success.

Alternatively, if you prefer, you can make a one-off donation or donate in the old-fashioned way by sending us a cheque.

Rachel (rachel.roberts@surreycoalition.org.uk)

WEEKLY EVENTS

DAY	TIME	ACTIVITY
Every Monday	11am - 12pm	Virtual Café and craft discussion group
Every Tuesday	4pm - 5pm	Glee Club
Every other Wednesday	2:30pm - 3:30pm	Peer Support Club
Every Thursday	2:30pm - 3:30pm	Quiz
Every Friday	11:30am - 12:30pm	Virtual Café and Get More Active discussion group

Dates for your Diary

Our activities are online by Zoom unless otherwise stated i.e. Hybrid/ In-person

The links to attend online are available from our website, The Weekly Update (newsletter) and by contacting the Involvement team.

If you would like more information about The Coalition's events, please e-mail involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk, call 01483 456 558 or SMS: 07908 671 402

EVENTS JULY

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Tuesday 1 st July	1:00pm – 2:30pm	FoCUS East & Mid In person Reigate
Thursday 3 rd July	1:00pm – 2:30pm	FoCUS West & NE Hants In person Upper Hale
Sunday 6 th July		Parallel Windsor In person
Monday 7 th July	1:00pm – 2:30pm	FoCUS North West Online
Wednesday 9 th July	1pm - 2:30pm	FoCUS South West Online
Friday 25 th July	1pm -3pm	IMHN Coordinating Group Online

EVENTS AUGUST

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
TBC	TBC	Martial Arts with Les Bubka In person Godalming
Wednesday 13 th August	10am - 11am	NW Mental Health Stakeholder meeting Online
Thursday 14 th August	10am - 11am	E&M Mental Health Stakeholder meeting Online
Saturday 16 th August	All day	Superhero Tri In person

EVENTS SEPTEMBER

DATE	TIME	ACTIVITY
Monday 8 th September	12:30pm - 2pm	FoCUS East, Mid & North West Online
Wednesday 10 th September	12:30pm - 2pm	FoCUS South West, West and NE Hants Online
Monday 22 nd September	10:30am - 12:30pm	Dorking Walking Festival In person
Friday 26 th September	1pm - 3pm	IMHN Coordinating meeting Online



We always love to hear from you!

Office:

Email: info@surreycoalition.org.uk

Phone: 01483 456 558

SMS: 07563 997 932

Yasmin Broome

Involvement

Phone: 07455 267 424

Guy Hill

Independent Mental Health Network

Coordinator Phone:

07305 009 869

Immy Markwick FoCUS

and IMHN Phone:

07593 991 993

Sylwia Squires

Tech to Community Connect Project

Phone: 07547 016 933

Katy Hubbard Get More

Active project Phone:

07434 865 062

Surrey Coalition of Disabled People
Astolat, Coniers Way,
Burpham, Guildford,
Surrey GU4 7HL



Let us lead you in the right direction

With over 20 years of experience within direct payments, DhPayroll offers a simple yet comprehensive service that is both efficient and cost effective.

Our friendly and experienced staff are always on hand to answer queries and reassure anyone who is worried about their responsibilities as an employer.

Join us today and benefit from:

- ✓ A payroll service provided by an experienced and helpful team.
- ✓ Free workplace pensions auto-enrolment set-up and support.
- ✓ Free text messaging reminder service.
- ✓ Free secure online portal for accessing payroll documents.
- ✓ Monthly Newslink updates, blogs and social media posts, to keep you up to date and in the know.
- ✓ An accessible website.
- ✓ Online submission of timesheets and other forms, for ease and accuracy.



Get in touch today!

