



One Small Step to Reconnect

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Age UK Bristol and the **SUPPORT HUB** for older people

Age UK Bristol is an independent local charity working in the community to support older people, their families and carers.

Since March 2020, Age UK Bristol has worked closely with third sector partners to create the Support Hub for Older People to provide practical, social and emotional support to people over 50 during the Coronavirus Crisis.

The Hub has almost 40 members.



The campaign idea

- Following the lifting of lockdown, members of the Support Hub said that many older people were at an increased risk of loneliness and social isolation.
- A group came together to discuss ideas and ways we could support, encourage and empower older people to reconnect. From this came the campaign, 'One Small Step to Reconnect' focused on the small actions people could take that could either be in-person, online or over the phone to reconnect with their community.



What we did

- A campaign launched 1st August and ran for the full month, sharing real life stories of older people connected through Age UK Bristol and the Support Hub. Their experience of lockdown, what small steps they had taken and their advice for other older people.
- 8 stories on our website and social media.
- Shared advice and support, activities and events throughout August.
- We went on BBC Radio Bristol, as did two older people featured in the campaign.
- 'Tai Chi in the Park' day, 6 different locations across the city held free Tai Chi sessions.

Don't be afraid to ask for extra help

If you find it difficult to communicate with staff wearing face coverings, need somewhere to sit and rest, or wish to pay with cash rather than a bank card, staff should be ready to meet these needs. Do not feel that you are being burdensome if the measures do not work for you.



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Face coverings may still be requested

in some venues and public transport. **Many people will still choose to wear a mask for extra peace of mind** although there are no longer laws around them. Coverings only offer protection if they securely cover your nose and mouth, and reusable ones should be washed after each use. If your face covering causes your glasses to fog up, make sure it is tight enough to stop warm air coming out of the top, position your glasses on top of the covering and keep some lens wipes handy.



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"Prioritize the things that are the most important to you." - Margaret's journey out of lockdown.

"I found that to stop feeling overwhelmed I had to take things as they came and decide what my priorities were."

"The Tai-Chi training was my way of taking a step forward in my own time to a bit of normality." She said. Margaret is looking forward to sharing what she has learnt at her local Women's Institute sessions where she plans to run Tai-Chi sessions.



“You’ve got to get out to help yourself.” David's journey out of lockdown.

“It was alright after I done it the first time. Once you’ve done it once you feel alright about it again. I always wear my mask, but I don’t want to use a bus just yet until I feel ready.”

“I’ve picked up a lot about gardening over the years and I thought it would be good to help out, I think for anybody it’s good to feel useful.”

David’s advice for people who were worried about going out again post-lockdown was to try out a walk around the neighborhood and speak to your neighbors as you go. *“You’ve got to get out to help yourself, else it can make you feel a bit closed in and lethargic so you’ve just got to do it.”*



"Getting away from your four walls is very important." Catherine's journey out of lockdown.

At first I'd take the bus 3 or 4 stops, just to get out of the house and then turn around...but other days I'd open the back door and sit on the step if I was feeling closed in. Even just sitting in a different room can help, have a change of scene."



What have we learnt?

- Need to continue providing virtual activities for older people less able to get out to in person sessions.
- Value of collaboration with other organisations to ensure that 'no door is the wrong door' for an older person in a time of crisis
- People will engage in the way most appropriate to them and at their own pace – allow time
- Greatest success is had when people do something they enjoy so find out what appeals
- Encourage people to talk about their feelings about reconnecting and to just think of doing one thing to avoid feeling overwhelmed

