

Newsletter 2022

The Official Centre 404 Newsletter

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Celebrating 70 Years of Centre 404!

Hello and welcome, we are happy to introduce the 2022 Spring Edition and 4th Volume of our new Centre 404 Newsletter. On the following pages you'll find a summary of the last three months from across our services, as well as our plans over the coming months to celebrate our 70th Birthday. We want to take this opportunity to thank our supporters and recognise what a huge impact Centre 404 has had on the community over these 70 years. We hope that you enjoy the photos and the stories on these pages!



Our 70th Birthday!

#Heritage
#Legacy

CENTRE 404

Celebrating 70 Years!



Message from the CEO

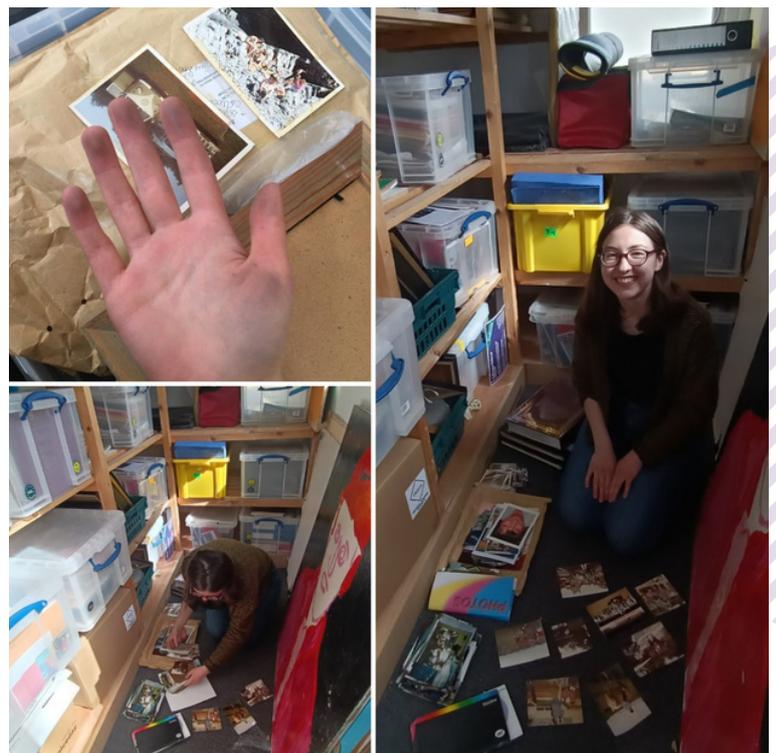
“We have officially begun our 70th birthday celebrations from November 2021 and are excited to spend the 12 months of our anniversary year looking back and celebrating how far the organisation has come, and how the lives of the people we support have changed. Look out on all our social media platforms for lots of snippets, pictures, and stories .” -Linda CEO

AGM 2022- 28th July

We are delighted to be holding our first AGM Summer Party Event for 3 years, since our relocation and Covid-19 lockdowns! This special and well-loved event will be for our service users, staff, families, volunteers and close supporters. Watch this space for more information.

Heritage Project

In celebration of our 70th year we are looking back at our heritage. The first step is reorganising and preserving our archive and the material it holds. We have a large collection of photographs dating back to at least 1973 and minutes of meetings from 1955 onwards. At the AGM in July we will display an exhibition of photos from this archive, exploring the story they tell of Centre 404. The next stage will be an oral history project: beginning in the autumn, we hope to interview some long-time service users and family carers and to record their memories of the service through the years.



Our Heritage Project Coordinator, Agnes, getting dusty in the archive room and sorting through old photos and materials.

The Safeguarding Unwise Friendship Group

Learning & Leisure & Independent Living

Our focused work with our flagship Safeguarding Unwise Friendships Group continues to go from strength to strength; with four specialist workshops taking place since the last newsletter with service users identified at high risk of mate crime:

- Two Specialist Male-Focused Group: There are often less options for men to come together and share in a safe space. These groups allow a social space to hang out, feel at ease, and see that there is an alternative social circle available other than the exploitive relationships in their own lives.
- Two Specialist Relationship Workshops: These focused on different types of relationships and discussing signs of a good relationship compared to warning signs of when someone is taking advantage and even abusing the relationship. These will develop skills to build their self-confidence in saying 'No!' to exploitative and abusive relationships. One success story already saw one of our service users able to remove a homeless person who had taken residence in their home. After attending one session where we focused on being assertive and saying no if we don't feel comfortable; the service user had the knowledge and the confidence to ask this person to leave.

We also organised a Coffee Morning at St Luke's, with the aim of tackling loneliness, as this is often the cause for people being drawn into exploitive relationships. The event allowed people come together, meet new people over tea, coffee and nibbles, and learn practical steps to reduce social isolation, such as; understanding how to make positive friendships, getting information on various social groups, and understanding the signs of abusive and coercive relationships. Over 25 people attended in the beautiful setting of St. Luke's Church which added extra touch to the occasion. The morning was really informative and fun, with service users giving really positive feedback and looking forward to the next one!

Digital Inclusion: At the coffee morning we also completed a short survey to understand how many people have digital devices, access to internet and the necessary skills to be online safely. As we know, due to Covid-19, most services went online, including GP appointments. If someone does not have access to a digital device and the internet, then they are at risk of being both physically and digitally socially isolated. Armed with this helpful information we will continue tackling digital isolation and support our service users to access both digital devices and coaching sessions, to learn how to use those devices and be online safely.



International Women's Day

#BreakTheBias CENTRE 404

Celebrating International Women's Day

Guest Speaker: Dr. Rachel Moseley
on **Autistic Women and Girls**

Tuesday 8th March **11-12 on Zoom**



Autistic girls and women face unique challenges throughout their lifespans, with many receiving insufficient support. Dr Rachel Moseley (pronouns she/her), a principal academic in psychology at Bournemouth University, will discuss some of these challenges around under-recognition of autistic girls and people assigned female at birth, camouflaging and burn-out, mental ill-health and hormonal changes. This talk will approach these issues from a scientific perspective and the lived experience of a late-diagnosed autistic adult.

We hosted some exciting events as part of International Women's Day on 8th March.

We were delighted to have over 20 people attend and benefit from our webinar with Dr. Rachel Moseley on the unique challenges face by autistic women and girls. Please [click here](#) or on the photo to the left for the recording, which we highly recommend to both families and professionals. We also hosted a small International Women's Day Museum in Room A all day on Tuesday 8th March at our Head Office on 404 Camden Road. This featured a historical timeline, artwork from our service users, and pictures and biographies of famous and inspirational neurodiverse women and girls.

We as a charity commit to #BreakTheBias and to continuing to help forge an inclusive world for autistic women, women with learning disabilities, and their families.

To the right you can see our staff and service users pledging to #BreakTheBias for all women by taking the International Women's Day supporting pose.



#BreakTheBias
#IWD2022 CENTRE 404

Our Senior Leadership Team



Claire Curtis
Director of Independent Living & Specialist Services

Linda McGowan
CEO

Tracy Seymou
Director of People & Resources

Anamaria Vrkic
Head of Learning & Leisure

Eve O'Brien
Interim Head of Supporting Families

We also celebrated our strong female leadership team at Centre 404. Please see the full post by [clicking here](#) on on the photo to the left.

We are extremely proud that our CEO and all four of our Directors and Heads of Service are strong female leaders. This said we are also proud of the fact that we have a 42/58 ratio of male and female managers at Centre 404, as men are traditionally underrepresented in the care sector. We are happy to have achieved a good gender balance throughout our staff teams, and that this balance is also represented in our Executive Board.

Independent Living

Dignity Action Day 2022

On 1st February we celebrated #DignityActionDay by wearing red to symbolise putting undignified care to bed. Throughout our Independent Living projects service users and staff had a lot of fun discussing what dignity means to them.

These included:

- Listening.
- ☺ Being nice.
- Talking to you.
- ☕ To have a cup of tea when I want to.
- To decorate my flat as I like to.
- To have my privacy when I want to be alone.
- To be involved in my personal care.
- ✿ To respect my cultural background.



World Autism Awareness Week

We proudly supported #WorldAutismAcceptanceWeek from 28th March- 3rd April, which this year importantly shifted the focus from raising awareness to increasing acceptance and understanding of Autism.

All week we shared videos featuring people we support sharing their unique and individual experiences of being autistic. If you'd like to understand more then please watch and listen to our videos with Judith, Nikki and Chris, available on all our social media channels including TikTok, Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

#AutismAcceptanceWeek

CENTRE 404

“As an autistic person I face barriers where people may not understand me... and I wish that there were people that would understand me a great deal more.” - Chris



Learning & Leisure



Young Carers Awareness Day

On 16th March we were raising awareness for #YoungCarersActionDay by celebrating the wonderful young people in our Siblings Group who help to support their family members at Centre 404. [Click here](#) or on the photo left to see and hear some members sharing what they most enjoy doing with their sibling. We were really proud and happy to see that this video received the most post engagement we've ever had at Centre 404 with 89 likes on Instagram!

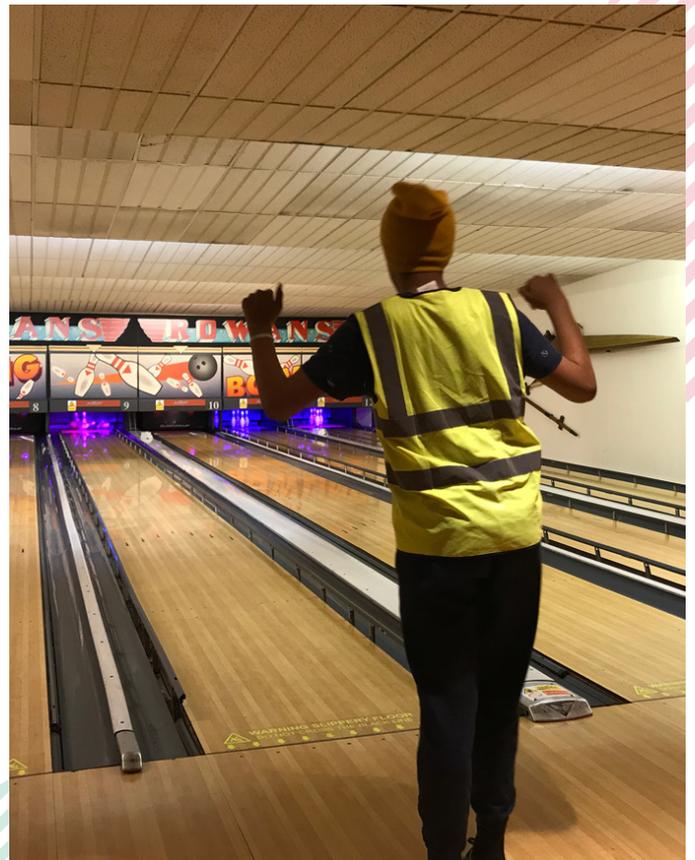
In addition to our Siblings group that supports 8-12 year olds, we are also starting a new Young Carers Group for 13-17 year olds after the Easter holidays. Please [contact us](#) for more information.

"If you want to know how to treat a child with learning disabilities or autism, watch their siblings. They will show you."

Camden Short Breaks

On 1st April, we kicked off our new contract with Camden Council. Centre 404 will be delivering over 7,000 hours annually of homebased and community support to Children and Young people in Camden, including Positive Behavioural Support.

This essential service will deliver respite to over 35 families. We have a new team of coordinators and support workers that have joined Centre 404 to deliver this amazing service. So far, children and young people have enjoyed trampolining at the Sobell Centre, Victoria Park outings, exploring Highgate, and Ability Bikes in Regents Park. Some children have also signed up to access our after-school clubs and will be joining playschemes in the coming half-term and over the summer.



Supporting Families

Waltham Forest SENDIASS

Alongside the Enfield SENDIAS Service, Centre 404 and the Supporting Families Team have recently started hosting the Waltham Forest SENDIAS Service, which supports Waltham Forest residents aged 0 – 25 with any Special Educational Need or Disability, and their families. SENDIAS Service stands for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information and Advice Service – which is why it’s often shortened! We are excited to have Assia, Sharmila and Amanda join our team! If you wanted to learn more about the work they do you can see their [website here](#) or contact the team on sendiasswalthamf@centre404.org.uk. We now support carers in 8 London boroughs – Waltham Forest, Enfield, Hackney, Camden, Islington, City of London, Haringey, and Tower Hamlets.



Events and 'Time to Talk'

The Supporting Families team continues to run events and activities for family carers both online and face-to-face. For those comfortable and able to access our face-to-face events, it’s been lovely to have the opportunity to hold events in person once more. If you wanted to look at our upcoming events you can have a look at our [website here](#) or contact the Supporting Families team at family@centre404.org.uk if you care for a child or an adult with a learning disability and/or autism and wanted to find out more and attend one of our coffee mornings or webinars. Topics recently have included mental health and wellness, in honour of the national ‘Time to Talk’ day on the 2nd February. Carers shared ways they support their own mental health and resources that they access – some examples in the pictures left!



Staff



Apprenticeships

We're delighted to introduce our 2 new apprentices, Bradley Harron and Jordan Forbes who started with Centre 404 as part of the Kickstart scheme. Director of People and Resources, Tracy Seymour, said:

"We have had such fantastic young talent join us through the Kickstart scheme and I am delighted that we have now been able to continue Jordan and Bradley's journey with Centre 404 with their apprenticeships. Recently we have been awarded a number of new contracts and Bradley has already made a big difference to some of these projects by being on site and helping to make the centre much more warm and welcoming with his decorating skills. Jordan has been getting underway with supporting Centre 404's drive to improved digital capability and I am looking forward to seeing them gain the tools and knowledge to succeed in their chosen careers and for Centre 404 which is so important to us all."

Work With Us!

As we expand our reach, we are increasing the opportunities to work at Centre 404.

We have taken on new projects in Brent, Camden, Haringey and Tower Hamlets and are excited to have expanded our reach to 7 London Boroughs!

This means we have a number of flexible roles available for Support Work. [Visit our website](#) for further details.

We have also been working on a video compilation series called 'My Day, Our Week', which show the typical and varied days of our Support Workers at Centre 404. They really demonstrate how in Social Care, Every Day is Different! Check out the videos on our social media pages, (link to the first one by [clicking here](#) or the image to the left!)

Come join our amazing team at Centre 404!



My Day, Our Week

Social Care, Where Every Day
is Different

Staff Spotlights

Inara (Independent Living)

Inara is celebrating an amazing 20 years of being a Support Worker with Centre 404!

She started in 2002 and describes her first day: "it was a dark December day and VW grabbed my hand straight away when I walked in. I knew this was a sign and where I should be."

Inara has been at her current project, Kiver Road, for 18 years now, and has made a huge impact on all the service users that she works with, particularly with MJ with whom she is a key worker for. Thank you to Inara for her dedication and support over these 20 years!

"Helping and caring for others makes me happy. I feel I am in the right place." -Inara



Keith (Learning & Leisure)

Keith joined Centre 404 nearly 3 years ago, and works with the Day Opportunities Service. He has shared that he fell into Support Work after finding that caring for his mother reduced his own anxiety, as he was focused on looking after someone else and giving something back. Keith really goes above and beyond in his job every day and makes a huge impact on all those who meet him; service users and staff alike. He is part of a group of male Support Workers that also share their creative passions such as music, which is rewarding for them and much-loved by the people we support.

"I think it's a wonderful place to be, full of nice surprises...and working with people who need you is a very rewarding thing to do."

-Keith



Volunteers



From Volunteer to Staff: Jade's Story

Jade started volunteering in November 2021 after applying for Support Work and being suggested to start as a volunteer to build her confidence and knowledge. She was then successfully recruited as a Support Worker in March 2022. Jade described how she felt; "I was over the moon" and how people made the transition and application accessible for her.

"Sometimes it's hard to get somewhere, but volunteering gets you a long way to where you want to get to. If I didn't do that then I would probably still be looking for work, so I'm glad I done that" - Jade

Jade has a learning disability herself and explained that working here gives her more confidence.

"I could do hair and make up but I wouldn't feel as confident and comfortable as I do here. I understand people here and no matter what disability and special needs you got, you can do anything in life." - Jade

From Service User to Volunteer: Al's Story

Al has been a service user with Discovery House in Tower Hamlets since he was just 11 years old. Al enjoyed his time at this project (which Centre 404 took over in early 2021) so much that he was upset when the provision had to end for him when he turned 18. The staff worked together with Al and his Mum and the Volunteer Coordinator at Centre 404 to enable him to rejoin in 2021 but as a volunteer.

Al is autistic and has been allocated to support a young non-verbal child; a relationship that has been very positive for both of them.

"I am happy to look after children, and help other young people in their development and improve their independent living." - Al



Then and Now: Top shows Al when he first joined in 2014 and bottom shows him whilst volunteering in 2022



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