

A lifeline for lockdown and beyond



Love4Life – our dating and friendship programme – is a real lifeline to many of our members, especially those who live alone and have no other support. When lockdown hit, we were devastated that we could no longer hold face-to-face events with our members. We did everything we could to build a programme of online sessions to make sure that our members didn't miss out.



Love4Life programme manager Hayley explained: "Many of our Love4Life members have struggled with their mental health during the pandemic, feeling anxious and lonely. During the summer months, we managed to introduce some face-to-face events, making sure we follow government guidelines to keep everyone safe. Luke – who moved out into his own home during lockdown – came to a recent event, and everyone was giving him advice and being so supportive, it was so lovely to see. It makes you realise what they have all have missed out on."

Love4Life member Nicola said: "The lockdown made us feel down, not being able to see everyone. It was tough to get through."

Hayley continued: "I can see the effects the first lockdown had, and as we head into another, it reinforces how vital Love4Life is – not just for making friends and widening social circles, but also for people's mental health and support network. The difference Love4Life makes is astonishing. I can see at our recent events that members are struggling a bit with socialising again. After being indoors for so long it can feel

really overwhelming to suddenly be talking to more people."

But of course there have been lots of positive things happening for Love4Life members during lockdown. Sophie and Ryan, who this time last year moved into their first home together, got engaged during lockdown.

“ I was really excited last Christmas to spend it together in our first home but this year we get to spend it planning our wedding; I'm so happy! I can't thank FitzRoy and Love4Life enough for running the events that led to me meeting my true love. I owe you all so many thanks for giving me a future to look forward to and the confidence to enjoy it. ” Sophie.

We want this for everybody! Love4Life is entirely funded by donations. It is thanks to our kind supporters that we can continue to provide this service and reach even more people who otherwise face a life in permanent lockdown.



Strengthening our lifeline

We are delighted to announce that we have recruited the very first member of our new Founding Circle of Giving for Love4Life.

Members of the Founding Circle of Giving pledge a gift of at least £1,000 per year to lay the foundations for increased private support of Love4Life as it continues to evolve and expand.

Edward Thornton-Firkin's connection with FitzRoy dates back to 2001 when he became a Trustee. He served as Chair of Trustees from 2008 to 2013, has been a valued Patron of FitzRoy since 2016, and is a much-valued advisor and advocate.

“When chairing the FitzRoy Trustee Board, I was approached on three separate occasions by people who we supported to ask my permission for them to marry. “Not up to me” I replied, but these approaches filled my heart with joy because these requests had been brought about by the opportunities FitzRoy provided.

So I was honoured to become a member of the Founding Circle of Giving for Love4Life and to know that this could help ensure the future of that wonderful human experience happening for those Love4Life supports – to love and to be loved. Edward



For further information about the Founding Circle of Giving for Love4Life please contact Emma Harrison emma.harrison@fitzroy.org or 01730 711 116.

Thank you for helping us make Love4Life a lifeline for even more people with learning disabilities and autism.



At FitzRoy, we value every single donation, great or small. All donations from this issue of FitzRoy News will go to Love4Life so if you would like to support this amazing project, please complete the form on the back of the newsletter and send it back to us. Thank you so much. We couldn't do it without you!

This photo was taken in February before coronavirus restrictions were in place

Responding to an outbreak

Hearing that we have lost someone we support to coronavirus is the moment we all dread. Sadly, FitzRoy has recently had our second confirmed coronavirus death. Colleagues at Hipswell Highway – our registered care service in Coventry – have been dealing with the loss of one of their residents, in the first case where someone contracted the virus when in the service.

We caught up with Service Manager Jayne Norton at the end of an incredibly difficult few weeks.

"When Marian, became very poorly, (not with any coronavirus symptoms) she went into hospital where a routine coronavirus test came back positive. We were devastated. I had a moment of 'what do I need to do first?'; this was our first outbreak at the service. Thankfully, all our services developed robust outbreak plans months ago. We went through ours and everything came together.

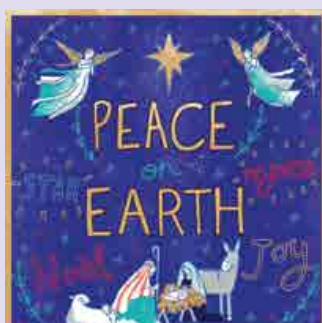
"We tested all staff and people we support; two staff members tested positive, but everyone else tested negative thankfully.

"With two staff members self isolating, the whole staff team pulled together. After the initial shock,

everyone was positive, offering to work longer days and cover shifts to protect the people we support. I am so proud of the staff team, I don't have the words to describe how brilliant they have all been. It was a real team effort, they were amazing.

"We are grieving for the loss of Marian, and have been in close contact with her sister, who has been saying such lovely things about our staff. Our biggest fear was that it was something we had done, or hadn't done, that led to Marian contracting the virus. But we have investigated and we can honestly say we did everything we could to keep coronavirus out, we could not have done more. We all have to pull together and we'll get through this."

FitzRoy Christmas cards are now on sale!



Only
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per pack of
10 cards

The greeting
inside is **WISHING
YOU A VERY HAPPY
CHRISTMAS**. Each
pack contains
envelopes.

To order your cards, complete the form on the back page or visit www.fitzroy.org/christmas-cards
To order over the phone, call Rebecca on **07795 970 264**, leave a message and she will get back to you.

Donation Form

Help us transform lives. Your donation, large or small, will support someone with a learning disability to live more independently.

Thank you.

Your details

Title: First name:

Surname:

Full home address:

Postcode:

☐ **GIFT AID** I confirm that I would like all my donations, past, present and future, to FitzRoy to be treated as Gift Aid donations. I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year, it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Make a donation

Visit www.fitzroy.org/donate to make a credit or debit card donation, or [send a cheque payable to FitzRoy Support](#) and send it with this form to FREEPOST RLTB-UUSU-LCKT, FitzRoy House, 8 Hylton Road, Petersfield, GU32 3JY.

Text donations up to £20: text **FitzRoy** followed by the amount to **70480**.

Become a Friend of FitzRoy

To join Friends of FitzRoy, visit www.fitzroy.org/friends to set up a direct debit or complete the form below and return it to us to set up a standing order (minimum £3 a month donation). If you already give us a regular donation of £3 or more a month, you will automatically become a Friend.

To the Manager of: (Name of your bank/building society)

Address of your bank/building society:

Sort code: - - Account number:

Account name:

I would like to set up a standing order for the monthly sum of:

£3 ☐ £6 ☐ £10 ☐ Other £

Commencing on / and on the same date each month thereafter until further notice.

Signed: Date: / /

Please pay to: FitzRoy Support, National Westminster Bank, Farnham.

Sort code: 60-10-14 Account number: 58510540

Bank reference only:

Order your Christmas Cards

- 1 Please send me pack(s) of Christmas Greetings.
- 2 Please send me pack(s) of Peace on Earth.
- 3 Please send me pack(s) of Happy Christmas baubles.
- 4 Please send me pack(s) of Rejoice at Christmas angels.
- 5 Please send me pack(s) of Merry Christmas robin.

Total cost of cards (£3.95 per pack of 10 cards) £

Postage costs (second class) 1 - 5 packs - add £2.95 6 or more packs - add £4.00

Total postage added £

I would like to add a donation £

Total enclosed £

A huge thank you to everyone who has taken part, fundraised or donated so far to our **Around the World in 80 days**



challenge. It is taking a massive team effort for us to complete the 25,127 miles together within 80 days. So far we have raised **£9,000** and every penny will go towards transforming the lives of people with learning disabilities and autism.

Thank you www.fitzroy.org/aroundtheworld



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To find out more about how we use your personal data read our privacy policy www.fitzroy.org/legal

Join the conversation



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