

December 2020

Let's Spread
Some Love This
Christmas

In Conversation
With: Vice
Chancellor Prof
Kath Mitchell

How Lofi Hip-
Hop Helps Me
Study

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Warmth in Winter

MEET THE TEAM



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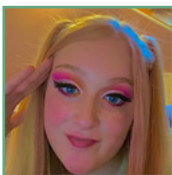
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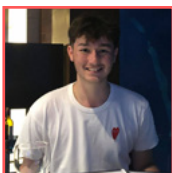
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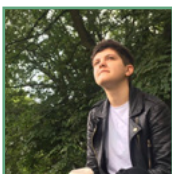
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Let's Spread Some Love This Christmas

2020. What a year. Is it just me or has it somehow managed to go excruciatingly slow and fly by at the same time? And now we're on the annual countdown to Christmas. With the awful circumstances that have come to define this year, it feels more important than ever to find ways of spreading that good old Christmas spirit as much as we can.

While at the time of writing, none of us know what exactly we will be able to do for Christmas, it is effectively guaranteed that we will be living under restrictions, whatever these may be. So, while a sense of normality is certainly more difficult to achieve now, we can still come together, united in the aim of making this usually beloved time of year feel as special as possible in these challenging circumstances.

There will be many of us who are unable to see all the people we love in the usual ways this festive season. We may have to channel our love for them in other ways besides those much-loved hugs for example. And while, there is no doubt that it's going to be tough, there are ways we can try and put a positive spin on the situation. It presents us with the opportunity to get creative and think of other ways to show someone that we care.

Here are a few ways to spread the love this Christmas:

Letters

Handwritten letters, while now considered a more old-school method of communication, contain a sense of preciousness which is hard to beat. They are much more personal than emails for example, and there is something emotional about them. Maybe this is because the words often come from such a heartfelt place.

Isolation has been a huge struggle for so many people this year, and there is something so heart-warming in the image of someone finding a letter from their loved one in the post, something besides the drudgery of bills etc. It's almost like that little ray

of sunshine we all need in our day.

While the concept of words on a page is amazingly simple, these letters are immeasurable in their value. They are like presents in themselves, and often become treasured keepsakes for those who receive them. This year, more than ever, it really could make someone's day. They can be looked at time and time again, which is particularly important if someone is struggling or feeling low. They are a reminder that someone is thinking of you. You can't underestimate the power these letters have in offering someone that vital pick-me-up.

Phone Calls

Something I think that can be taken for granted at times, is the impact a phone call can have. While life can feel like a barrage of chaos at times, and painfully lonely at others, checking in on someone by calling them can make the world of difference.

Hearing the voice of someone that you care about can feel more meaningful than a message sometimes, it being a more direct form of contact. Hearing their voice can make you feel closer to them, almost like having them there with you for those few minutes. Even just receiving a phone call can put a smile on someone's face. Though a very small gesture in itself, you putting in the effort to speak to them can be a precious reminder that someone cares.



Care-packages

Although things are currently very restricted, there are ways to put a fun twist on things. For instance, why not get your Santa-on, and deliver a loved one a little care package? A little collection of some of their favourite things. And if you really want to get into the Christmas spirit, you could even deliver it to them on Christmas Eve. Alongside this, there is also the fact you get to see them face-to-face (kind of). A socially distanced few minutes with someone is a present in itself at the moment.

It might have to be a doorstep delivery, but from a distance, you still get to watch the person's face light up at the special gift. Little things such as chocolate, marshmallows, whatever it is you know they love, can really help cheer someone up and shows them how much they mean to you. Knowing someone listens to you and pays attention to the things you like is something many of us cherish and appreciate. It's a really fun yet personal way to show someone you are thinking of them. Sometimes, it is remembering the little things, such as a person's very favourite kind of sweet for example, that means the most. Their reaction to this is sure to be priceless. When it is so easy to feel alone, to know someone thought of you can ease that burden and remind you that someone is always there.

Scrapbooks

A similarly personal gift you could give someone is a scrapbook. This makes a perfect Christmas present, but is also a great way to surprise someone in general, particularly if someone is going through a bit of a tough time. It's a really meaningful way to show someone how important they are to you. A collection of the memories you share with someone is likely to be something they treasure forever. It's a memento of the amazing times you shared with them, as well as a reminder that you have so many more to come, even if we might have to wait a while longer to have them.

It's always nice to reminisce, and Christmas is the perfect time to show people how much we appreciate them. You might come across pictures you forgot about or find yourself drawing on memories that you haven't thought about for a while. The process of making it can also be a little project for yourself, a pleasant way to fill the hours that many of us now have free.

Reflection

While it may not be the kind of Christmas we all know and love, with big family dinners and celebrations, one way of looking at it, is that it is just one of the things we can all come together and celebrate later. If there's a silver lining amongst this craziness, it's that we can come out of it appreciating each other more.

I'm thinking of starting a list to remind myself of all the things I have to make up for later down the line, including my 21st birthday which will have happened during this second lockdown. While we have to rely a lot on facetime and zoom at the moment, just imagine the excitement, the pure joy when we can finally start crossing things off that list, when we can finally have that hug we've waited so long for. Having something to look forward to is a huge factor in helping to keep us going.

So, however you can, let's spread some love this Christmas.

Written by Lauren Davison



Holiday Characters You Have Probably Never Heard Of

If you celebrate Christmas or have lived through December in a predominantly English-speaking country, you know who Santa is. Big, red, and full of carbs, the character of Santa Claus has inspired children and won the world over, due to his cheerful appearance and caring demeanour. Praise be to the jolly fat man. However, what came before him?

Mr Claus, being both a 19th century and English creation, is both very recent and quite possibly the only holiday icon taught in the UK. What did other countries have before Santa invaded? Well, that's what you're reading this to find out. Wrap up warm and prepare those roasted chestnuts: these are four Christmas characters you were probably never taught.

Frau Perchta

Starting us off, we have the central European witch Frau Perchta. Hailing from 14th century Germany and Austria, Frau Perchta was a horrid old hag. With two faces, each having a cast iron nose; a deep white coat and a long sharp blade; her story was a terror to those of the time.

Her actions weren't random, however. She had a set target: to punish lazy women; especially if they didn't spin their flax (a straw-esc plant spun tight to make baskets).

If on the night before Christmas, she found that a woman had spun her flax tightly, then she would reward them with a single piece of silver, placed in their shoes. If the flax was still loose, however? She would take her long sharp knife, slit the woman's guts open and replace them with straw and stones. A horrid tale, but at least it's an excellent motivator to finish all your housework.

Kallikantzaros

The Kallikantzaros are creatures known for their mischief and mayhem. Depicted as tall, shadowy figures with long tongues and the features of a goat/monkey hybrid; the Kallikantzaros are native to Greece and their mythology. According to legend, they spend all year performing the same task over and over, trying to chop down the world tree and topple the earth into darkness. That is until the festive season rolls around.

Across the 12 days of Christmas, Kallikantzaros are granted access to the mortal world. Here they make it their



one goal to create as much chaos as possible, ruining the holiday for everyone. "How do you stop them?" you may ask. Why, with a colander, of course. By merely placing a colander on your doorstep, the Kallikantzaros will be so distracted counting the holes that it will forget about causing any mischief.

The Yule Lads

Numerous and bizarre, the Yule Lads are Iceland's resident gift-givers. Each lad visiting on one of the 13



days before Christmas, these boys will bestow upon children sweets or rotten potatoes, depending on whether or not they've been good or bad.

However, don't think that's all they offer. Each Yule Lad has a vastly different personality and will cause mayhem whenever they pay a visit. Take Door Slammer, for example, who will slam all the doors in your home throughout the night. Or Spoon Licker who will raid your drawers and lick every spoon in your house. Or, even Window Peeper, creepily watching you, throughout the night, while you sleep.

More recent adaptations have these characters, thankfully, acting more friendly than their original incarnations. However, better to keep your spoons still locked up, to be safe.

Befana

The final, and only biblical character on the list, Befana the main character is a famously celebrated Italian folk story. The tale tells of a kindly older woman whose house was a shelter for the three wise men, as they travelled to visit Baby Jesus. In response to her hospitality, the wise men offered her the chance to see the baby herself, however, declined due to having to sweep her house.

A while later, Befana decided to stop cleaning and to visit Jesus, but found herself too far behind the wise men and got lost. Legend has it that, she still wanders villages and cities, leaving sweets and gifts on the doorstep of children's houses. She does this hoping that that is the home of Jesus who will finally receive her presents, fulfilling her want to visit him. A tragic tale to what is just an old kind soul.

Happy holidays to all and stay safe over the winter.

Written by Harry Potton

IN CONVERSATION WITH: VICE-CHANCELLOR PROF KATH MITCHELL

Set up by the incredible Alex Wood at Phantom Radio and filmed by the Phantom TV crew with Alex Gower at the helm, we were lucky enough to speak with the university's vice-chancellor, Professor Kath Mitchell. Hosted by Union of Students' president, Corey Beck, we asked about how students and staff are coping with the pandemic and looking ahead to make sure students can travel safely, complete their degrees and have the best support possible.



How do you think students are reacting to the university's guidelines?

I am incredibly proud of the students. I think what you can see is that we have not had a significant outbreak in the university and I think that is because students have followed the guidance really, really well. We know there might have been breaches but that is nationwide. I think people have been very supportive of the guidance we've given.

But I also think about the commuter students and our balance between students living in halls and students commuting is a bit more complex than some other institutions but I think we've managed that incredibly well.

The city are very, very positive about how students have been in our city. We've not had any, I suppose, untoward media. We've not had ourselves out chanting in the streets when we came into different lockdowns.

We do know it's a stressful time and we have set up a specialist hotline – driven by the Union of Students. We are seeing a significant number of students needing to access support for loneliness, mental health issues and just to keep contact and so again, collaborative working is really important. Do not stop using that hotline! It's really important we hear what you need and how to work with you.

Do you think [online teaching] gives you more power to give students the best student experience possible?

So, we're only going to move to the full online, following government guidance, for the last two weeks of this semester. Working with the Union of Students, we want to plan around 'what does that look like, again, for semester two'. I think that we

need to make sure there's equity in that experience for all of our students and I think that we can be a bit bolder ... when we know we can get safe travel at Christmas.

If we can get a safe return [after the Christmas break] I would want to be looking at how we can extend that engagement – particularly on some of the extra-curriculars.

I wouldn't want to be closing down. Let's not look to close in, let's look to more opportunity

I think what has come through loud and clear from our students, which I am delighted about, is that the majority of our students are still very appreciative of the face-to-face learning. We have some courses where it is absolutely paramount that they're in (all the clinical skills for health, social work, all the allied health professions and teaching) we can't not give them face-to-face as it's part of their delivery. We should be planning how to make that accessible to all of our students.

How do you think staff are coping with the new workload in keeping to these changes in teaching?

There is a massive challenge in the amount of additional work that COVID-19 has created. We are in a pandemic environment and the pressure is that we've had to deliver lectures and practical sessions more than once – sometimes up to four times – straining the downtime of lecturers.

The additional issues that we've had to face are worries about financial elements ... I think for semester two we'll be able to plan more effectively

and we've seen some fantastic recruitment. We've done as many briefings as we can and we have a support mechanism in place for staff. I think some staff are frustrated, and you can't blame them, but the message is that universities are very lucky in terms of employment.

Especially in a city where industries have had to reduce their staffing base, we are really proud that we've been able to maintain our jobs throughout this period.

With the travel window approaching, students are encouraged to take a test. Is that a safe environment and are you confident in that approach?

We have decided to follow their advice and we have put ourselves forward to do that asymptomatic testing. I need to be very clear here.

We expect that students will want to get tested before they go home based on the fact that they want to go home and enjoy Christmas with their families.

We will have a site which will be for asymptomatics – which should be an environment free of any symptoms.

Particularly for individuals that have vulnerable families or are looking to visit family members who are vulnerable, I would be encouraging students to take a test.

It isn't mandatory, but I think in order for students to feel safe themselves. That goes for the staggered return, that two week return, we're asking students what's best for them and when they want to travel so we can best accommodate.

The key element for asymptomatic testing is that I encourage students to take it for their own comfort with their families. What I want to assure our students is that we're using clinical staff in that environment. We will be using high calibre, senior clinical staff so that it's a very safe environment – it will be the safest we can possibly deliver for them.

The next question is, on return, will we be doing asymptomatic testing? I have no idea because we don't know what the government are going to ask us to do. My view would be, 'why would we not?', to give students some confidence in returning. Of course, we still need to be keeping our distance, wearing face coverings and be safe in the way that we engage with each other.

I want students to feel safe on campus.

I want to have as much face-to-face teaching as we can post-Christmas.

I don't think the university would be in the positive position it's in if we had not worked as collaboratively. Just to let students know, we probably ring Corey every night asking 'what do you think



students will think?' to everything we do. That approach has been really powerful in the decisions we've made – the whole of the Union of Students has been fantastic and I'd ask students to always engage with your Union. You have the most powerful voice in getting to me, as your Vice-Chancellor, and also the governing council of the institution to make sure everything is heard loud and clear.

Again, we understand the frustrations in not having exactly what you might have signed up to but I think what we're trying to do is give you the biggest experience that we can in the safest possible way. I couldn't have asked for better students and staff and I hope that we can offer the best we can next semester. The asymptomatic testing might give government some confidence that semester two can be a bit more flexible in how we deliver the programme.

Do you have a final message for the students?

So, this isn't going to be the same Christmas as you've always had and I know how students usually celebrate Christmas – I've got children who are students and still want to celebrate. Please enjoy the time with your families, please make sure you are safe so we can enjoy semester two.

I do want to make a special note for the students who will be staying in halls; we have a number of international students and those for whom the university is their home.

We are working in partnership with the Union of Students for them and I ask those students make sure they work with DSRL (Derby Student Residences Ltd.) and those in private accommodation let the university know where they are so that we can support you during the festive period.

It won't be the same as the Christmas before, but please enjoy it the best you can and keep in touch with us.

Thank you for having me and thank you to everyone at Phantom, it's been a privilege to be on.

Written by Owen Corkin

[Click here to watch the conversation edited by the Phantom TV team](#)

Tymon Talks: Rediscovering the Art of Conversation

We need something to make us feel good and that is more important now than ever before. The only problem I see, is how do we achieve that cosy feeling that should come with winter?

When the clocks changed on the 25th of October and the days appeared to be cut in half, there seemed to be no other alternative than to lock ourselves indoors. It's something we are all extremely good at now. But, without the long and luscious summer days, the gloom of the living room somehow leaves a sour taste in the mouth—no matter how many new Netflix series we binge to keep entertained.



It's hard. We all know it is, and the hardest thing is that we all know that most likely it is not going to get better soon. So, we must make the most of this situation. But how do we do that?

This time last year for me, a cosy night in was a hot chocolate or a glass of red in front of the TV. Now I could not think of anything worse, I yearn for those doors to be flung open again and to see humans.

I know what you're going to say, 'but you can have a zoom call or a virtual pub quiz'. Well, I'm sorry to put a stop to your ideas but if I'm invited to another one of those, there is a strong chance my laptop is being launched out of my bedroom window. I want real people, in real places, talking face to face.

That leaves us with only one option doesn't it: spending more time with those people who can't leave the house either. A daunting prospect perhaps?

If you have spent the past eight months with the same people, I appreciate it might be hard to reinvigorate those conversations, and sometimes it does feel like you're going in circles. I mean how long

can you talk about your trip to Tesco or the fact you can't believe you left your mask in the car again! To some extent those trips can be the highlight of my week now.

What you have got to do is dig a bit deeper. You might think you know your flatmates or your parents but believe me there is more than you might think.

I noticed that about halfway through the first lockdown I had totally forgotten how to have an actual conversation and all I could talk about was what was in the news. But what I've discovered now, and I implore you all to do the same, is try and ask questions you've never known the answer to or get them to talk about topics you've never discussed before.

If it does nothing more than bring a smile to your face to find out that your mum was given knitted knickers to wear for school or your dad would like to retrain as a drum and base DJ (both true) it just takes your mind off what's going on outside.

At first, I will concede it might be hard to get going but just give it a try. If you're struggling, google 'dinner party questions'—there are loads of random openers that will get the conversational juices flowing.

Finding out new things about people close to us when you are convinced you know it all is such a wonderful thing. It somehow does just make you feel good. It gives you that cosy feeling inside. I do not know exactly what it is or how it works, but trust me, it's lovely.

So please this winter, instead of getting that hot chocolate or wine and flicking straight to a box set, turn off the telly and instead turn to the person that's sat with you and just have a natter.



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The Problem with Winter

Everyone loves December because, I mean, Christmas is

awesome. You get free stuff (sort of), you get to see all the family members you really like (and the ones you hate, but hey ho), and you get to eat... like... a lot. I've had my ups and downs with Christmas; my festive cheer seems to pick and choose which years to appear. But the main thing to remember is that Christmas is like the guiding light in the storm that is winter. It gives you something to look forward to, or if not at least something to distract you from the fact it gets dark at 4pm. And for some, this is just about the only good thing about winter at all.

This Is The Problem, Though

Seasonal Affective Disorder (or SAD) is a condition that causes the sufferer to feel a kind of depression within certain months, with some people feeling worse during the summer or the winter period. It's more common to affect people during the winter months, as the cause is generally linked to a lack of exposure to sunlight. Considering we get like 3 hours of sunlight a day during the end of the year (if we're lucky), it would make sense that this is when people would be suffering a lack of sunlight. Even though we all know a middle aged British man loves to take his shirt off any time the sun even makes a brief appearance, sunbathing isn't generally an option during December. Also, the fact that it's dark when we wake up and when we go to sleep and practically the entire time between, may just mess with our body clocks and cause the symptoms of SAD, such as fatigue and low mood, to manifest.

It's important to look out for your friends in general, as mental illness is sort of having a field day right now. In 2014, it was found that 19.7% of people in the UK over the age of 16 were showing symptoms of depression or anxiety (which actually often walk hand in hand). It's also estimated that 1 in 6 people have experienced a common mental health problem in the past week. That's 17%. That's like, 1.3 billion people. However, during the winter months whilst you're thinking of which 'Best Mum' mug to get as a present this year, is the time when it's most likely that someone you know may be suffering due to SAD.

Seasonal depression is difficult to deal with, because although regular depression obviously sucks, people with good old fashioned year round depression are more likely to have coping mechanisms to help them such as medication and therapy and loved ones who know to check in on them and who they can reach out to. With seasonal depression, you're not as likely to have these measures in place, because, well, it only really impacts you sometimes. There's also a huge stigma around mental illness in general, but if you try to explain to someone that you feel suicidal because it's November, people probably won't take you very seriously.

SAD is a real thing that affects and harms

people though, and there is actual science behind it. Light helps to regulate a lot of stuff for us, including our mood, sleep, and activity. If there isn't a lot of natural light, we might start to struggle to control these things. And SAD isn't simply feeling a bit down because it's cold and dark, it can ruin your entire day-to-day life. I realise most of the people reading this have probably had experience with some form of mental health issue, but for those of you who haven't, depression really does upend your entire life.

Imagine that you're in bed, you've just woken up, but you're still exhausted. Your eyes feel itchy and heavy, your body is aching with fatigue, and getting out of the warmth and comfort of your bed feels as doable as Sisyphus pushing his giant boulder up a hill. When you do get out of bed, you have to start thinking about things like what to eat for breakfast (even though you're not hungry) and what clothes to wear, when even just the idea of taking a shower or brushing your teeth feels like too much effort for the amount of energy you have. Seriously, it's like that, but every day. Now, imagine someone who feels intimidated by the idea of picking out a t-shirt trying to do the things that you do every day. It just doesn't happen.

Anyway...

So, my point is – yes, I have a point – take extra care of your loved ones during winter.

Check up on the people you care about and make sure they're doing okay. If you feel like they're pulling away, or you haven't seen them for a while, just reach out to them. If someone you know isn't eating or sleeping properly (and this can mean either too little or too much), just make sure they aren't struggling. The signs of SAD aren't often clear, but they can be if you pay attention. The consequences, however, can be extreme.

And on that light note, I just wanted to say Happy Christmas and have a great winter break! Christmas really is a fun time I think, even if your favourite thing about it is just getting to decorate, or to eat too much and not have to feel guilty about it (because hey, it's Christmas! I might as well have that extra slice of cake). It's even a great excuse to watch literally any movie that has even a hint of snow – looking at you, *Die Hard* – and listen to songs that are objectively terrible without being judged! Even if you hate all that, I think we all have a reason to be excited about the end of 2020, the year of cancelled plans and stress-buying toilet paper. Roll on 2021, let's hope that we can finally leave the house!

Written By Jess Sharples



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A chilly 5-star performance puts Skegness Town in the hat for the second round of the FA Vase

As the threat of a national lockdown loomed large over the country, the sweet release of a day out at the football has become even more valued. The weekend in question was the second round of the FA Vase come around.

Vics were a club Skegness Town manager Nathan Collins had never heard of before thus, in our strange world of this hobby, it was more attractive for the away side.

As for me, the journey to The Anderson Electrical Arena was a very wet one. Windscreen wipers swished backwards and forwards to try and keep the view in front visible, coupled with the sound of raindrops as they bounced off the screen. I arrived an hour and half before kick-off as the wind whistled in the air. Evidence of the huge downpour filled the potholes in the car park where even the cars looked like they were shivering.

In I went to pursue the stadium for only my second visit of the season. The Arena housed two empty stands, one of which contained a food hut that served the best chance of internal warmth. Burgers, tea, and even the infamous Bovril drink acted as radiators for the bellies of spectators. The steam dissolved in the cold air before attention turned to the players as they arrived.

The rain had calmed down, however the cold remained. Moments later, the players timidly emerged from the changing rooms, smothered in layers as they prepared to warm up.

After getting the team sheet and doing my preparation for the club's social media, I then prepared a warm-up of my own – a steak bake.

After our best attempts of getting warm, the game got underway with The Vics starting the brighter of the two teams. The midfield of Callum Clarke and Morgan Bell controlled the early moments of the game, yet it was the away side who had the first chance from a corner kick. The defence held strong and forced the attacker to head the ball over the bar.

Tension in the technical area was high. The two managers fired comments back and forth and thawed the dugout with their heated exchange. Comments were heard questioning the consistency of the referee and linesman's decisions.

Borrowash almost broke the deadlock on 18 minutes. A superb ball from Adam Swain was met at the back post by Chris Richards but his header glanced the crossbar.

Skegness responded with Danny Brooks whose header was wide of the mark after the ball was cheaply given away.

Another opportunity came when top goal scorer Jenk Acar tingled the cold hands of home keeper

Danny Rigley; who was the busier of the two throughout the game.

The Vics felt the cold and created their own problems. They continuously gave the ball away under no pressure, however the visitors failed to take advantage of the openings presented to them.

As the clouds broke in the grey coloured sky, there was a rare appearance for the sun which caused some players problems as it glistened in their eyes.

Skegness did find a way past before the break. After Daniel Durkin's header trickled into the net, the home side surrounded the referee about what appeared to be an infringement in the bogged area on keeper Rigley.

Half-time came and a half-time trip to the club house was due as I craved a hot cup of coffee in an attempt to keep my body awake and my brain focused as the chilly, bitter wind slashed me in the face.

After the restart, Skegness quickly took control of the game. The away side started well, with Danny Trott's volley superbly tipped over by the Vics 'keeper, but his efforts were cancelled out, as the same man met the resultant corner to get his goal.

The exotically named right-back James Petronzio then wrapped up the tie, after he latched onto a knock-down and fired home the visitor's third goal of the match. A frustrating one for the goalkeeper, who was left helpless as the ball skidded up off the cold and slippery surface.

From there, the game became damage-control for Skegness. The visitors just made sure they gave their hosts no way back into the contest. Joel Isaac came the closest to grabbing one back for

The Vics, however his shot was comfortably kept out by the coldest man on the pitch, the opposition goalkeeper, who's layers were the only thing between him and hypothermia.

The opposition were later reduced to ten men after a late skirmish resulted in a silly, needless red. After initially giving a yellow for the foul, a mass brawl erupted, and the referee dished out the red for something said in the aftermath.

To add to the late drama, the brawl appeared to have left The Vics centre back with a bite on his neck, however no further cards were shown.

In the end, it was Skegness who progressed into the next round of the Vase, and myself who progressed to the car, before immediately putting the heating on.

Written by Holly Wright



Interviewing Karla Cook: How the Direct Help and Advice charity is helping Derby families and individuals during this pandemic

Who are The Direct Help and Advice and what do they provide?

The Direct Help and Advice company provides direct help, via specialists, advice, advocacy and representations for families and individuals with upcoming crises. This is to prevent and alleviate homelessness, debt and housing difficulty. They provide free, independent and confidential services that provide support to the most vulnerable people within the community. The DHA will provide intervention, support and advice. Direct Help and Advice further provide training and skills development to a variety of vulnerable people in order to reduce levels of unemployment and promoting social and financial inclusion. Their aim is to try as much as possible to ensure that people understand to present early so that they can provide help for them quicker. Unfortunately, a number of people present at the crisis point. Having early interventions for those who are at risk of redundancy prevents the crisis. Direct Help and Advice also provide career guidance, employment and training support to those people at risk.



What problems are the DHA and The Derby Law Centre facing as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic?

Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, Direct Help and Advice were receiving on average 75 calls per week. Since the Coronavirus pandemic began to worsen in the United Kingdom, that number has risen to several hundred per week. As a result of this high volume of calls Direct Help and Advice & The Derby Law Centre have decided to open their Ilkeston facility to help keep control of the volume of calls being received. Chief Executive of Direct Advice and Help Karla Cook comments "people are presenting that haven't ever experienced financial difficulties. People who are self-employed. Who are not able to access benefits such as universal credit so they are not eligible for grants." The Coronavirus pandemic has affected a wide range of people and now presenting those who may not have rang the Direct Help and Advice prior to the pandemic. However, Direct Help and Advice are working alongside with The Derby Council to try to find a preventative measure.

What is Direct Help and Advice & The Derby Law Centre doing amidst the Coronavirus pandemic?

Direct Help and Advice's aim is to match resources with the need, to avoid a spike and have a smoother transition to avoid being overwhelmed with a number of people presenting. Now re-opening their Ilkeston office, Direct Help and Advice are using this office to provide a One Stop Shop which offers support and drop-ins to vulnerable families and individuals.



So that they can have a chat with staff around housing and debt. Working alongside. Another great aspect coming from Direct Help and Advice is their recognition that not every individual has the digital technologies to access their facilities, so when safe to do so their offices were open for face to face contact socially distanced and along with the Test and Trace system. However, not only that Karla Cook, the Chief Executive, commented the Direct Help and Advice is providing an "array of different things, such as the I Programme (digital exclusion)." A number of individuals do not have access to technologies or the internet. Karla Cook comments further that "some European social funding is being commissioned providing dongles and laptops, but those people do not know how to use them, so the I Programme shows them how to use it." The Derby Law centre is further completing preventative work with local authorities. In addition to this there is the Advice hub- through the alliance which is partnered with local authority, Direct Help and Advice.

How are vulnerable families/individuals suffering amidst the Coronavirus pandemic?

Due to the first national lockdown in March 2020, as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic, there were a number of people who found themselves vulnerable and at risk. Stay on possessions were provided that ensured landlords could not evict their tenants during the Coronavirus pandemic which slowed everything down for those presenting they were no longer being at risk of homelessness. However, data provided through charities showed that vulnerable families and individuals were still being evicted. Direct Help and Advice deferred recourse through help through the community, so that there was an advice line available for those who need help that covers a wide range of topics. Again, now entering a second national lockdown as announced by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, this could potentially be another problem faced again.

In Conclusion

To conclude this article, it is safe to say that the Coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on families and individuals making them at risk and vulnerable. Going into a second national lockdown could make this worse and at this point everyone needs to come together to support and help each other.

Written by Bethany Parkes

Homeless, not helpless

Consider for a moment. What does the phrase warmth in winter mean to you? What does it imply? How does it make you feel?

I for one envision snowy scenery, hot chocolate, favourite festive films, and cosy blankets. Some of you may envision dark afternoons, roaring fireplaces, and multiple episodes of Game of Thrones. Or how about carolling, crackers with cheese and mulled wine?

Whatever beverage you indulge in or activity you imagine yourself doing, it is often influenced by enculturation. Living in a developed country, the UK is largely secure, despite its personal controversies and conflicts. From annual John Lewis and Coca-Cola advertisements that make us tear up, to Aldi's new Christmas treats (almond or sloe gin mince pies are heavenly), we should remind ourselves of the small victories we achieve and luxuries we have access to. Particularly going into the winter season, it is inevitable our emotions reflect the weather. This leads me onto a sensitive, yet potent topic regarding a sizeable proportion of UK citizens.

National Homelessness

Many individuals are feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic more than others. Categorically from rough sleeping to statutory and hidden homelessness, many UK residents are under struggling conditions. Being aware of this does not mean you need to feel guilty for your comforts.

It suggests a shift in mind frame, to seek out gratitude in whatever form this may come as. Some simple at home suggestions are listed as below:

Meditation/podcasts: Spotify

Genres: Meditation discussions, bookworms, sports, stories, lifestyle, gaming, health and more.

Current listening to: Jon Kabat-Zinn

Youtube channels: such as Lo-fi, Study Jazz, TEDx Talks, Kurzgesagt in a nutshell

Mindful journaling

1. Bullet journaling:

Creative way to organise your day to day activities.

- Exercise plan
- Meal plan
- To do list
- 'What I'm Grateful For'
- Goals
- Appointments

Alternatively, follow social media accounts on Instagram or Pinterest for design inspiration

2. Freehand:

As it states, the act of writing on a blank page. Often best to do this when your mind is racing with plentiful ideas or worries

Embracing your close connections

Catch up with family and friends daily – remain present and talk things through from your day to how you are feeling. Listening is also just as important as being heard.



How you can lend a warm hand

If you desire to support the community proactively, you could donate unwanted goods, particularly clothing and food items to care for others and their warmth in winter.

Homeless charities current needs

1. Crisis: [Donate and Buy a Crisis gift](#)
[Take on the 12 days of Crisis fundraising challenge](#)
2. Shelter:

You can sign government petitions, [contact to inform them of someone you may know in need](#) or donate to their emergency coronavirus appeal.

Supermarket food donations

Simply drop off any unwanted goods on the trolleys, usually located near checkouts

- Canned goods, preferably protein-rich and nutrient packed. Examples: soups, tomatoes, baked beans, pulses, sweetcorn, peas, carrots, mackerel, sardines, and fruit are suitable options for winter
- Cupboard essentials: Rice, pasta, wholegrain cereals, bread, potatoes Think of easy meal ideas. Nothing fancy. But with purpose and calories!
- Prepacked bags. If you are in a hurry, Morrison's have created a new initiative, offering bags filled with ideal food bank goods at a reduced price
- Clothing donations. Morrison's usually have clothing banks, depending on your area.

You could kindly give a small £5 Greggs gift card to someone in need on your local high street. A warm pastry and drink may mean the world to them. My partner and I did this twice last Christmas - the satisfaction does not compare!

Or it can be a simple act of kindness like smiling. Oftentimes a step outside your own comfort zone. To remember we are all on different journeys. To remember homelessness is a condition standalone, not necessarily a condition attached to the individual's choices.

By reducing the stigma, we as a nation can remove barriers of access to these winter comforts.

Written by Kayleigh Ayriss

How Lofi Hip-Hop helps me Study

Throughout my A-Levels and my undergraduate degree, I found concentrating hard. My brain sees the amount of work I have to do and instinctively goes and finds something a lot more fun to do. It's always been my main downfall when it comes to academia and I've always struggled to find ways to deal with my poor concentration.



to help me study and, after a long search on YouTube came across a familiar thumbnail of an anime girl studying. Curious, I thought I'd give it a go as I had deadlines coming up and was pleasantly surprised at how chill and relaxing the music was.

Lo-fi is a form of hip-hop that takes inspiration from jazz, instrumentals and electronic music. By definition, Lo-fi stands for 'low-fidelity' meaning that a lot of tracks use sample distortions and vinyl scratches to promote feelings of nostalgia. For me, it helps create a relaxing atmosphere where my mind is stimulated enough to study, and it stops me going in search of more interesting things to do.

Both Hi-fi and Lo-fi have been proven to be the best kind of music to listen to whilst studying. This is mainly because music subconsciously sets you up in different moods from partying to study and from studying to

I started taking breaks in between sections of my work but realised that I would end up making a ten-minute break last around an hour. I'd lose my place in my work, eventually just giving in and closing my laptop for the day. Sectioning my individual assignments into smaller sections with smaller word counts meant that I wasn't getting overwhelmed with thousands of words – just hundreds.

My partner also told me to listen to music whilst I worked, having something else in the background but not being focused on has a massive impact for concentration. So, naturally, I went and put on my favourite playlist and started singing. Unsurprisingly, this did nothing for my concentration and I just ended up dancing around my room to ABBA instead of doing my work.

It took a while to find the right kind of music



sleeping. Relaxing music is the best kind to listen to when studying because it doesn't give you the desire to

get up and dance but actually creates a nice atmosphere around your workspace, making you want to sit down to study.

I have found that I am the most productive when I'm sat in my office, blanket over my legs with a hot cup of tea. My lamp goes on so I can clearly see the work I am working on and I put on the ChilledCow 'beats to relax/study to' stream on YouTube. I make sure the workspace is clean enough and I get to work. Creating a relaxing environment will also help to promote productivity and you'll find that deadlines become a lot less stressful when you create the right space to work.

Written by Alfie Pritchard



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