

# Beat the winter blues

**Are you feeling anxious, stressed or a bit depressed about the upcoming holiday period?**



There are many reasons that Christmas can provoke anxious feelings, but you can do something to help yourself before these feelings get overwhelming.

Bristol Wellbeing Therapies (formerly LIFT) has a selection of courses and groups that are open to anyone living in Bristol, and operate on a self-referral basis. You access a list of courses via their website <https://iapt-bristol.awp.nhs.uk/> and book onto them by giving Wellbeing Therapies a call on 0117 982 3209.

Previous attendees of Bristol Wellbeing Therapies' courses have commented that they are "fantastic, very supportive with tools provided to maintain going forward. A big thank you". One previous attendee said "I have also recommended this course to others", and that it was "very helpful and supportive".

If you think you or someone you know could benefit from a course such as stress and mood management, employment support, improving self-esteem, or sleep management, these are held at locations all around Bristol, are free, and have spaces available now.



## Ten tips for coping with Christmas

Christmas can be stressful and can heighten loneliness, financial and relationship problems. Here are ten tips to help you take care of your mental health during the festive season.

### 1. Keep things in perspective

Try not to expect too much of yourself. Imagine how unimportant the stress of Christmas preparations will seem in a couple of months' time.

### 2. Do one thing at a time

Make a list of the things that you need to do to prepare for Christmas, decide which item is the most important. Do that one thing and ignore everything else on the list. Then prioritise the next thing and so on.

### 3. Take time out for yourself

Even if it is just 10 minutes, lose yourself in something unconnected to Christmas - read a few pages of a book, watch part of a favourite



# Mental health support in Bristol over Christmas

For a full list of mental health support and resources that will be available in Bristol over Christmas, visit the Bristol Mental Health [website](#). In summary, all of these services will be open some, if not all of the Christmas holiday period.



**Off the Record** (0800 808 9120)  
**Bristol Mindline** (0808 808 0330)  
**National Mindline** (03001233393)  
**The Samaritans** (0845 90 90 90)  
**Bristol Crisis service** (0300 555 0334)  
**The Bristol Sanctuary** (0117 9542952)  
**Caring in Bristol** (01179244444)  
**Bristol Nightstop** (07979878814)  
**Childline** (08001111)

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## Bristol Sanctuary is open over Christmas

**Bristol  
Mental  
Health**

**bristol  
sanctuary**

The Bristol Sanctuary opened its doors over Easter this year, and is one of the three mental

health services run by St Mungo's Broadway, alongside the Men's Crisis House and the Assertive Contact and Engagement (ACE) service.

The Sanctuary is open Friday to Monday evenings, 7pm to 2am, and has been visited by between three and six people a night, many in a very distressed state.

A recent Sanctuary visitor talked about the 'life affirming and life changing' experience they had

DVD, go for a walk.

### 4. Live in the moment

There's no point dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. Living in the moment is easier said than done but simple mindfulness exercises can help to focus your mind on the present. Find out more at [www.bemindful.co.uk](http://www.bemindful.co.uk)

### 5. Talk about your anxieties

Talking with a friend or relative about the things that are worrying you can help you to realise that some of them aren't so important after all.

### 6. Don't have a competitive Christmas

Although it can be fun to swap festive wishes online, a core driver of social media is the instinct to show off and out-do others. Don't try to keep up with the Facebook-Joneses: do your own thing and leave them to compete on social media.

### 7. Limit alcohol, eat well and keep active

Alcohol is a depressant so limit your intake to within safe guidelines. Eat plenty of vegetables, fruit and lean meat, and drink lots of water in between the occasional festive indulgence. A brisk 20-minute walk will release endorphins.

### 8. Help others

Helping others or performing small acts of kindness is great for our own mental wellbeing. You could listen to a colleague's Christmas anxieties, do some festive volunteering

there, describing it as a “chance to reconnect with myself and my inner strength”.

They said: “It’s a truly unique service run by a fantastic team of staff that are clearly passionate about what they do. 7pm-2am at weekends means it’s a place to go when most services are closed. It’s a safe space to just be in and accept the present moment.”

Over the Christmas holidays, the Sanctuary will be open from 7pm till 2am on Christmas Day, Friday 25 December, on Boxing Day Saturday 26 December, on Sunday 27 and Monday 28 December, and Friday 1 through to Monday 4 January over the New Year weekend.

**Please ring 0117 954 2952: staff will answer after 5pm on days we are open or respond to any messages that may have been left if you want to visit.**

We hold regular meetings on the first Tuesday of every month at 1 New St, Bristol BS2 9DX from 2.30pm to 4.30pm, for people who have used the service or who want to contribute to its development. If you are interested in coming, we would love to see you – please email us at [awp.bmhsanctuary@nhs.net](mailto:awp.bmhsanctuary@nhs.net) or give us a call on 0117 9542952.

For more information about the Sanctuary, visit the Bristol Mental Health [website](#).

at a local charity, or take a festive treat to a lonely neighbour.

## 9. Sleep well

Avoid using smartphones, tablets or laptops before bed. Also avoid coffee, cola and energy drinks for a few hours before sleep. Try a simple relaxation exercise before bed: lie on your back with your eyes closed, tense all your muscles, then concentrate on relaxing each part of your body in turn.

## 10. Breathe

Before sleep or whenever you feel stress or anxiety building, concentrate for a minute or so on taking slow, steady, deep breaths, emptying your lungs as much as possible in between each breath. Breathe in for four counts and out for six, in through your nose, out through your mouth.

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## Help us with... **joining the dots**

**Bristol Mental Health's System Leadership team has been working with Otsuka Health Solutions on a project called Joining the Dots.**

The project aims to enable staff and service users to work together, on computer tools, to make better use of data and information and to co-produce important aspects of their care plans.

Service user and carer input into this project is essential for its success, and we are currently recruiting service users and carers onto the team. The project will run to the end of March 2016.

The project contains four project groups. Project group members will be paid an allowance for their time of £12.00 per hour plus reasonable travel expenses (in line with Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership Trust's expenses policy).

### Who can apply?

Anyone who is either a current service user (patient) or carer for someone who uses Bristol Mental Health services, or has been a service user or carer within the last 18 months.

### How to apply?

Please email [bhavna.mistry3@nhs.net](mailto:bhavna.mistry3@nhs.net) or telephone Tracy Clack on 0117 354 6202 to request an application pack, check eligibility, or for any other questions.

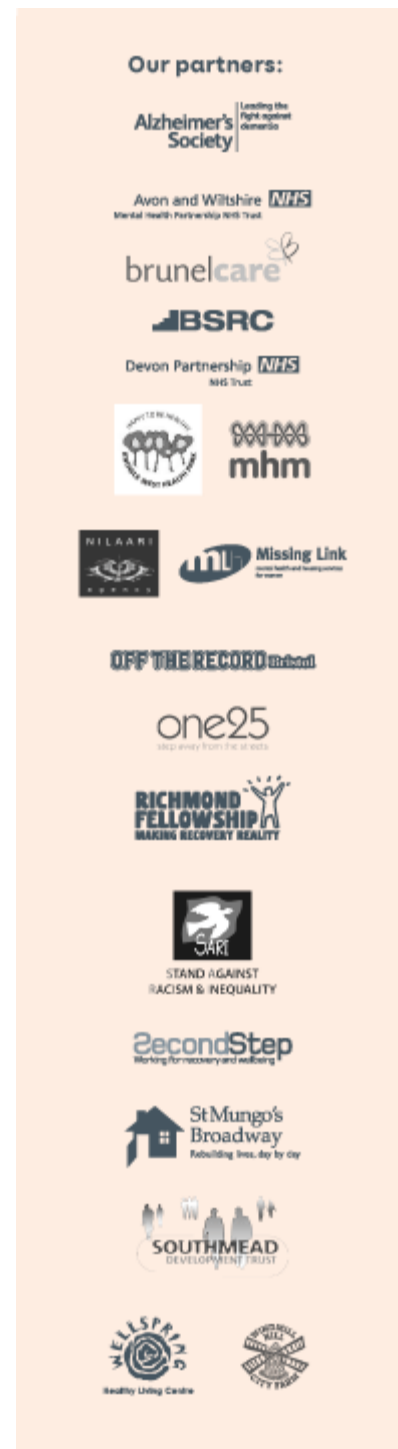
### What will the process be?

At the present time there will be no closing date for recruiting into these roles. Instead we will be undertaking a rolling programme of recruitment. Please apply as soon as you are able.

After applications are received service users and carers will be invited to an informal chat in order to discuss the roles. This will be followed by a decision being made on the candidate's suitability. Please note that there will be a service user or carer on the interview panel.

Both successful and unsuccessful candidates will be given feedback (if wanted) on their applications, within 3 days of the interview.

We would like to start gathering your views as soon as we are able so please apply as soon as you are able.



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## Interested in holding your own mental health event?

**proud to support**

**time to change**

**let's end mental health discrimination**

**Bristol's Community Access Support Service (CASS) is helping groups of people in Bristol apply for the Time to Change Champions Fund.**

The fund, which is available to individuals and groups city-wide, allows people to claim up to £500 towards running a mental health-related activity or event.

The fund aims to gather people with lived experience of mental health issues together, to share knowledge with others who may have a limited understanding. This will hopefully lead to changes in people's perceptions of mental health, including reducing the stigma and stereotypes that it can attract.

The sorts of activities people have organised before include art exhibitions, pop-up shops and music events. Time to Change is also offering free training to anyone wishing to apply for the fund.

Applications for the fund are currently being processed by CASS through the Wellspring Healthy Living Centre and details can be found on their [website](#). Applicants must sign up as Time to Change Champions before applying for the fund and all activities must take place before the end of February 2016.

For more information, contact Liz Andrews on [l.andrews@time-to-change.org.uk](mailto:l.andrews@time-to-change.org.uk) or call the Community Access Support Service on 0117 9119832 or email [info@cassbristol.org](mailto:info@cassbristol.org).

**Bristol  
Mental  
Health** : caring  
open  
hopeful

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