

July 3rd, 2020

Hello lovely volunteers!

This week I'm writing you a letter, as lists are not really my preferred style and we all like variety (I hope).

**Project5 is under-utilised**, this much we know. I realise that some volunteers are agitated by this fact, but we are keen to express the need to be patient whilst sharing your frustration. This is a national issue, with the effort to connect the staff need into existing offers has not yet proven successful for the NHS and us (who rely on their comms). We are a driving force in correcting this.

I've had very fruitful conversations with the NHSE wellbeing Comms lead and OD comms lead, who I've helped to realise the unique value and offer of Project5 – going forwards.

The most significant shift in appetite was in response to our statement of purpose – which is not to 'treat' mental health, but to **help the NHS to care for their staff, to keep them at work**. Showing our recognition of how hard the work is and communicating that we can help people to stay balanced and in touch with work, without them feeling they need to be unwell to access us. This is clearly the current need and an offer to fully utilise as we go ahead. The challenges of COVID are ongoing and will be exacerbated by the challenges of winter flu – we aim to have Project5, its volunteer base and its awareness in place to be accessed as and when people need it – from now until then, and beyond.

The NHSE Comms team were overwhelmingly impressed with our message, approach and volunteer base. They felt that they had not fully grasped the offer or understood it in the chaos of COVID and the flurry of offers made, many of which have now fallen away. They have committed to creating a COVID independent promotion strategy for Project5 and to locate this into a partnership agreement. This is all great news!

We have been exploring our comms strategy, in the absence of a comms team (which we are recruiting to – so apply if you have skills 😊 - <https://www.project5.org/p5teamapply>), and the experience of our volunteers. We realise now that we haven't provided a simple and easy strategy to aid you in sharing the message of Project5 via social media etc. We are working on this now, so thanks for the feedback!

Please hang in, the scale of our offer is jaw dropping and motivating the NHS and others to get behind Project5 to create meaningful impact for care staff who have already difficult roles which are now much harder.

Next week I plan to detail the Project5 delivery team to you – all working for free – our team is amazing and growing weekly. It may interest some to see what it takes for us to pull this together... and to realise that most of us met through Project5.

Appreciatively, Craig & the Project5 Team.

### Star Volunteer of the Week

Anne Best – It's easy to pick our Star of the week - Anne, almost everyone in Project5 talks about how amazing she is and how skilled she is in providing sound advice and getting tasks done. She picks up so many tasks in running the project that I can't really describe her role. An HR consultant by trade, her experience and insight has proven invaluable to us in the rapid learning adventure we like to call, 'Project5'. Thanks Anne, we really value your support!