

# Grapevine

Spring/Summer 2020



THANK YOU to everyone  
who contributed to this. It's  
great!

If you need help please just  
ask us. We'll do everything we  
can to help you.



## We will meet again

We're finding new ways of working  
(and new ways of living)



# What have you been up to?



## Finding the good in a bad situation

There's no getting away from the impact the Coronavirus is having on people's health (both physical and mental), finances, the wider economy and society.

However, this issue of Grapevine has been **created by you** to share the positive and inspiring ways in which you're all dealing with social-distancing and self-isolation.



[www.facebook.com/shalhousing](http://www.facebook.com/shalhousing)

We're here to help



01278 444344



07984 355553  
(text only)



07889 537164  
(out of hours)



2 King Square  
Bridgwater, TA6 3DG



[information@shal.org](mailto:information@shal.org)



[www.shal.org](http://www.shal.org)  
[www.mytenancy.co.uk](http://www.mytenancy.co.uk)

"We may be closed at the moment but we're opening up our online community.

"We're now on Facebook."

Lee



**ASB (plus a message)** to report anti-social behaviour;  
**BAL** to get your latest balance;  
**CARD** to order a new PayPoint card;  
**DD** to set up or amend a direct debit;  
**PAY** to find out how you can pay your rent;  
**REF** to get your Payment Reference Number for allpay;  
**RENTS (plus a message)** to talk to your Housing Officer;  
**REPAIR (plus a message)** to report a repair;  
**UC** to get all the information you need to claim Universal Credit (UC)

# House & Home



## Your tenancy is safe

We will not evict you if you can't pay your rent because of the measures taken to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic.

**We'll do everything we can to help you – and work with you to agree an affordable payment plan to clear any arrears that may build up.**

“I had a baby and came home the day before lockdown! He came 6 weeks early.”

*Victoria*

“We've been isolated since 13 March as my son has breathing problems so we haven't left the house at all since then. We've been home schooling, gardening and decorating!

“The garden and house have changed a lot!”

*Kayleigh*



“I am hearing my neighbours tell me their children are learning new life skills such as making a cup of coffee or hanging out washing as parents have the time to teach their children these skills.”

*Lorraine*



"Yes there are tears and cross words but there is joy when we have completed something together."

Michelle

"I am a key worker. I'm quite lucky (if you can call it that) to be able to still go to work."

Sonnya

## Storecupboard recipes

**40 Recipes**

Get the most out of your storecupboard staples in our delicious dinners, bakes and snacks. These simple, affordable recipes use everything from tinned tomatoes to flour and sugar.



[www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/storecupboard](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/storecupboard)

### Financial help and support

Hundreds of thousands of people have had to claim for financial help and support because of the measure taken to deal with the Coronavirus pandemic.

**Don't suffer in silence. If you're worried please contact us and we'll do everything we can to help you.**

**FAQs**

COVID-19: SHAL's FAQs

**SHAL**

COVID-19: our services

**Financial help**

COVID-19: claiming benefits

**Online with allpay**

**It's just a click away**

**@shalhousing**

[www.shal.org](http://www.shal.org)

## Helping our tenants get the financial support they're entitled to

Fund	Tenants	Total
Discretionary Housing Payments	31	<b>£32,127</b>
Exclusive offer from EDF	20	<b>£2,000</b>
Housing Benefit appeals	7	<b>£15,391</b>
Decorating vouchers	4	<b>£1,200</b>
Armed Forces funding	3	<b>£4,037</b>
Seed of Hope referrals	3	<b>£850</b>

"I know I am lucky to still be working and on full pay as a keyworker and other families have lost their job and have an uncertain future.

"It will be difficult for them to feel positive about things at the moment."

Lorraine

In total

**£57,389**

has been claimed to help tenants  
this year

## Your rent has changed

Don't forget from 6 April 2020 your weekly rent and service charge changed. You will have received a letter and automatic reminders by text confirming the new amount.

"Back in January we had smart meters put in. It's been a blessing because we can top up online."

Michelle



Somerset's Local Authorities

**Coronavirus support helpline**

**0300 790 6275**

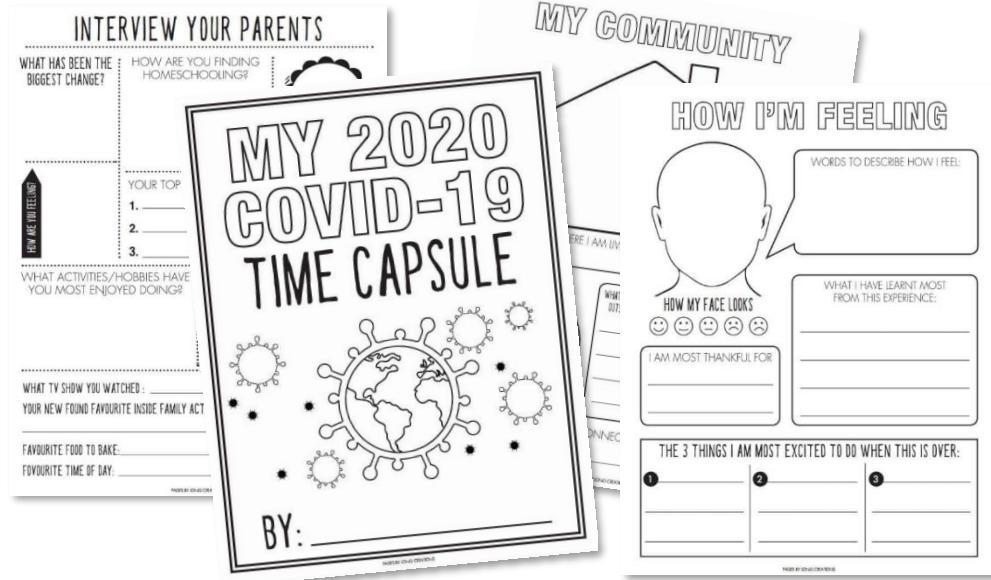
Available 8am to 6pm, seven days a week

A single number is now available for anyone in Somerset who needs Coronavirus related support from Somerset's Local Authorities. Anyone who can't find help within their community can use the helpline to get help and advice surrounding:

- **Emotional support if you're feeling worried or anxious**
- **Financial support**
- **Personal care and support including food and delivery of prescriptions**
- **Housing and support for the homeless**
- **Transport needs**
- **Waste collection and disposal**

## Fancy making a time capsule?

There are some great ideas out there to keep everyone busy. One is to make a time capsule. We've put a link on our website to activity sheets kids can print off and have fun completing. Not only will it keep them busy it will help them deal with what's going on at the moment.



[www.shal.org/make-a-time-capsule](http://www.shal.org/make-a-time-capsule)

## Property investment programme

We've had to pause our property investment programme because of the government's rules on staying at home and away from others. The programme has been paused, not cancelled, and we'll keep it under review. **We remain committed to investing in maintaining and improving the standard of our homes.** In 2019/20 we were able to complete:

Bathrooms	<b>40</b>	Kitchens	<b>43</b>
Boilers	<b>35</b>	Quantum heating	<b>6</b>
Doors	<b>57</b>		

## Neighbourhood & Community

### SHAL Community

As well as our Facebook page we also have a Group called **SHAL Community**, which is a group for SHAL's current tenants to meet each other in a safe and supportive online environment.

Take a look and let us know what you think.

[www.facebook.com/groups/shalcommunity](http://www.facebook.com/groups/shalcommunity)



## Commemorating VE Day in Nether Stowey & Over Stowey

I'm chair of the local branch of the Royal British Legion as well as a SHAL resident. We had plans for VE day including a project to put up framed poppies around the village in the run up to 8<sup>th</sup> May, working with the local school.

This was put under threat due to the Coronavirus. I spoke to a teacher at the school and put together an Amazon wish list for all the crafting kit I thought we would need for 27 framed poppies (1 for each of our village dead).

I shared this on our village Facebook page and invited members of the community to buy items off of the list. I managed to get out 16 kits to children in the village just before lockdown and today the last 2 are going out.

Framed poppies are now starting to appear in both Nether Stowey and Over Stowey. We've pulled this off despite me and most of my members being told to stay home for 12 weeks.



Vicki



"I think the mainly positive thing that I feel has come from lockdown is that neighbours are getting to know their neighbours more... there is a real community spirit."

Lorraine

"We will come out of this stronger and with a new view of what is and isn't important in our lives."

Tracey



"We also have our son at home and trying to home school him certainly gives us a whole new respect for the job teachers do."

Tracey

"I did a door stop drop for a couple of my friends who have had a hard time over the last few weeks.

"I went and bought some Easter eggs for them and their children just to put a smile on their faces even if it was for a short time."

Sonnya



## New homes

As part of the response to the Coronavirus pandemic our builders had to stop working on our new homes in Monmouth Street.

Likewise, the 7 new homes for rent and 3 new homes for shared ownership in Wellington have also been delayed.

We've kept the applicants in the loop and we're hoping to get them ready as soon as possible.

"I'm grateful to be in our home with such a subsidised rent compared to the private sector.

"I dread to think how other people are coping that are not fortunate to be a part of social housing."

Amanda

# Health & Wellbeing

## Mental health

We're all following the government rules on staying at home and away from others to help reduce the spread of the infection but it's now more important than ever to look after our mental health too. Having good mental health helps us relax more, achieve more and enjoy our lives more. The NHS has expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.

"I would say to anyone who needs help, it's so important to reach out and ask for help. It's hard but there is help if you just ask."

Amy

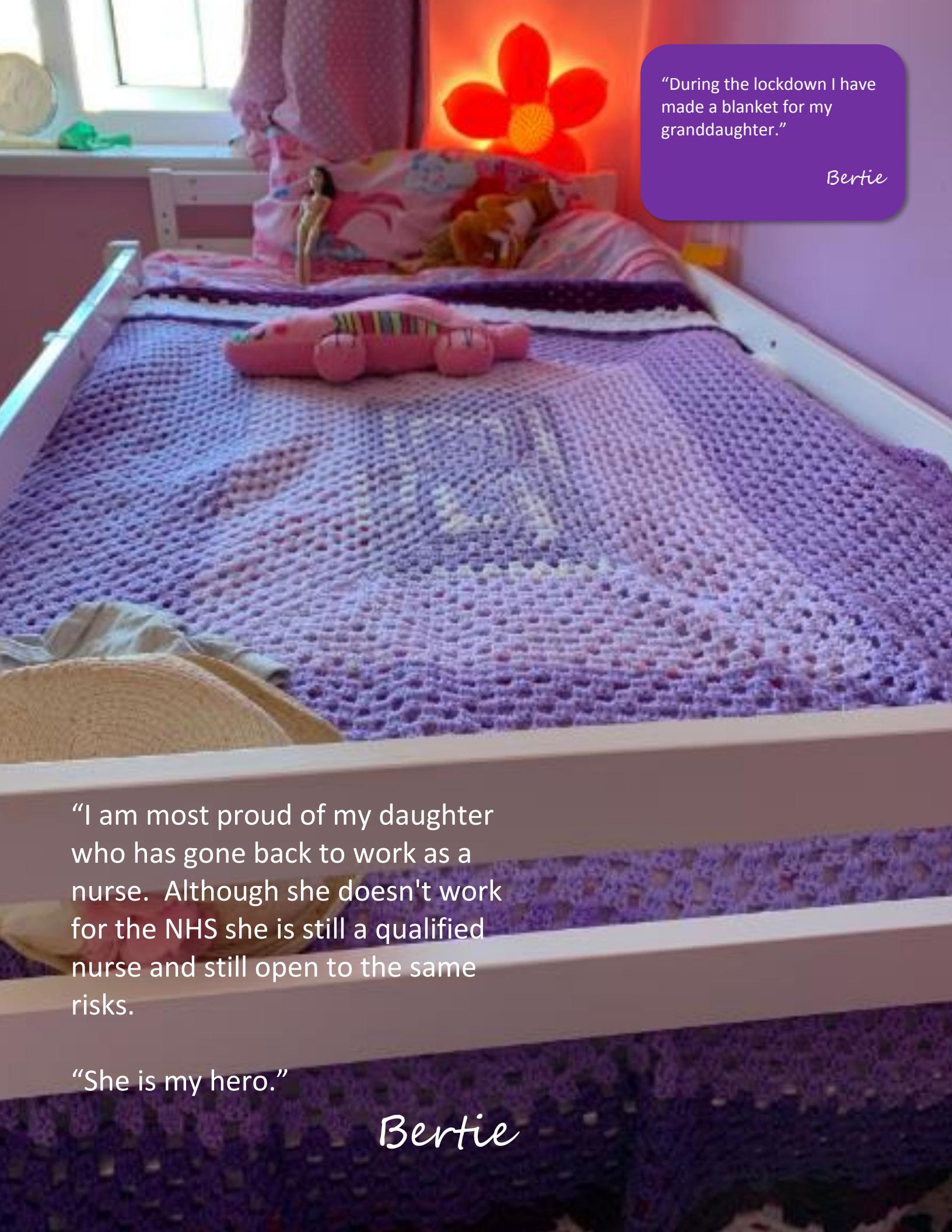
"We are thankful that we live in such a beautiful part of the country and that all our family and friends are well."

Lisa

"I'm a carer for my wife who has asthma and memory loss. I've found a great way to keep us occupied and stop us getting bored. It's LEGO Technic!"

"We've made a hovercraft, two cars, a lorry and a trailer. We've also made a short film for our disabled grandson using the LEGO models we made."

Rex



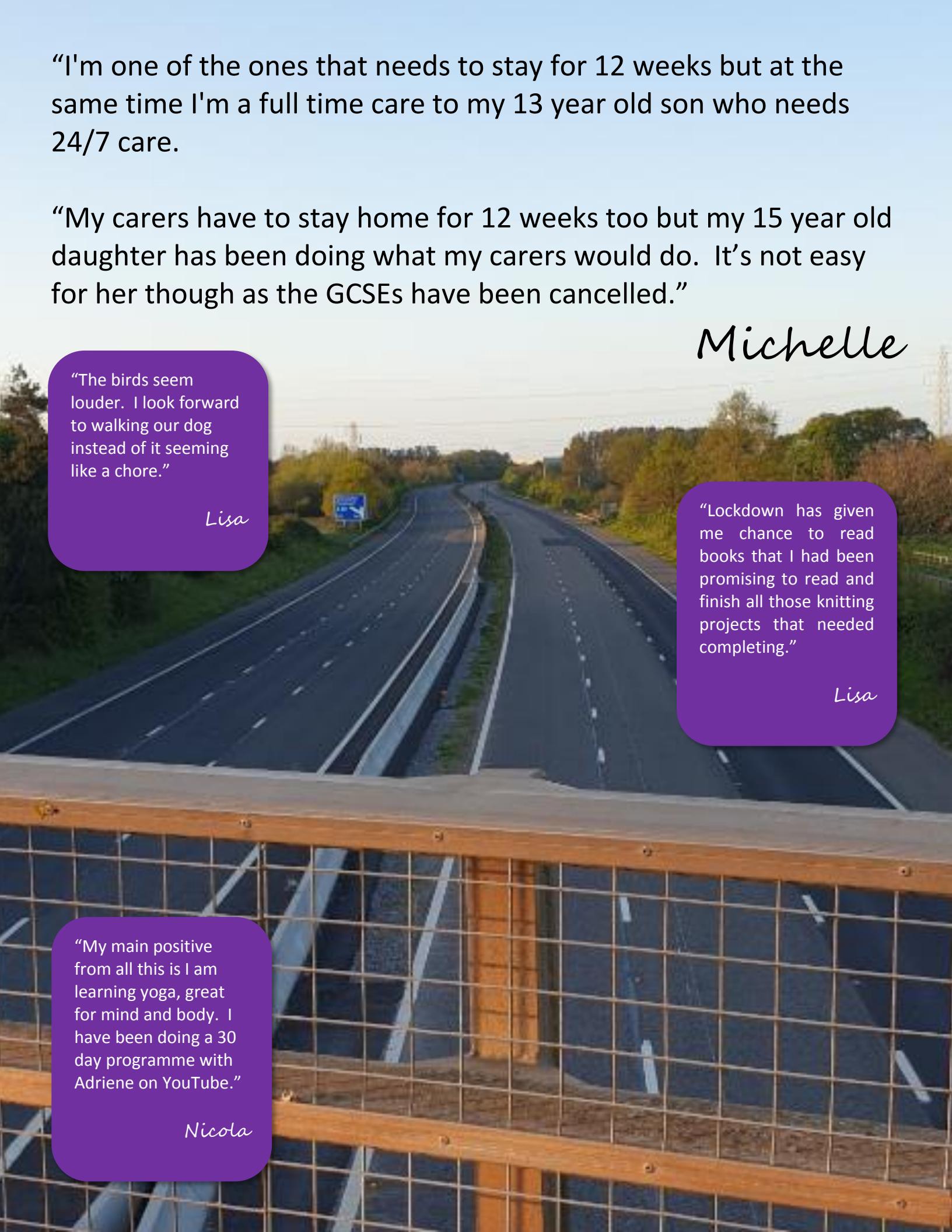
"During the lockdown I have made a blanket for my granddaughter."

Bertie

"I am most proud of my daughter who has gone back to work as a nurse. Although she doesn't work for the NHS she is still a qualified nurse and still open to the same risks.

"She is my hero."

Bertie



"I'm one of the ones that needs to stay for 12 weeks but at the same time I'm a full time care to my 13 year old son who needs 24/7 care."

"My carers have to stay home for 12 weeks too but my 15 year old daughter has been doing what my carers would do. It's not easy for her though as the GCSEs have been cancelled."

*Michelle*

"The birds seem louder. I look forward to walking our dog instead of it seeming like a chore."

*Lisa*

"Lockdown has given me chance to read books that I had been promising to read and finish all those knitting projects that needed completing."

*Lisa*

"My main positive from all this is I am learning yoga, great for mind and body. I have been doing a 30 day programme with Adriene on YouTube."

*Nicola*

# SHAL

## Working differently

The restrictions to daily life imposed by the government back in March were severe. Not only did it mean we weren't able to provide some of our services it meant we had to find new ways of working.

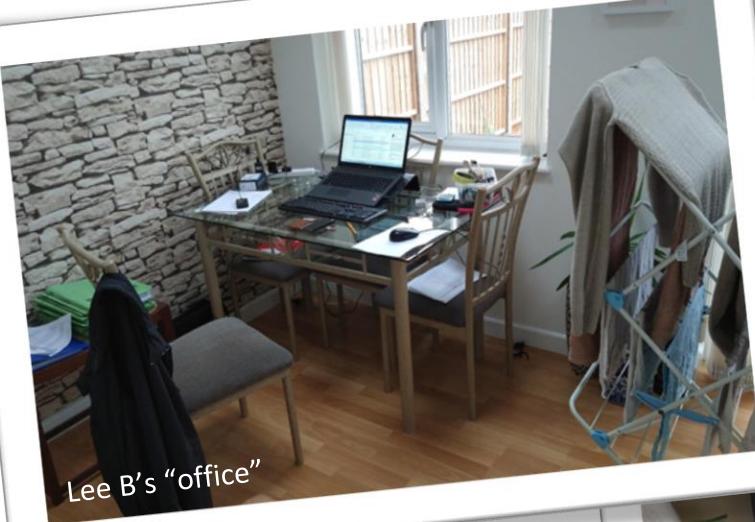
**SHAL's office may be closed but our staff are still working hard... at home.**

Kitchens have become offices and we're all using Skype for Business to check in with each other and have face to face meetings.



**"I hope all at SHAL are staying safe and well."**

*Tracey*



Lee B's "office"



It looks like Lola wants to help Sam with her emails!



"We will succeed and that success will belong to every one of us.

"Better days will return; we will be with our friends again; we will be with our families again; we will meet again."

*The Queen*

Travel the world without leaving your home

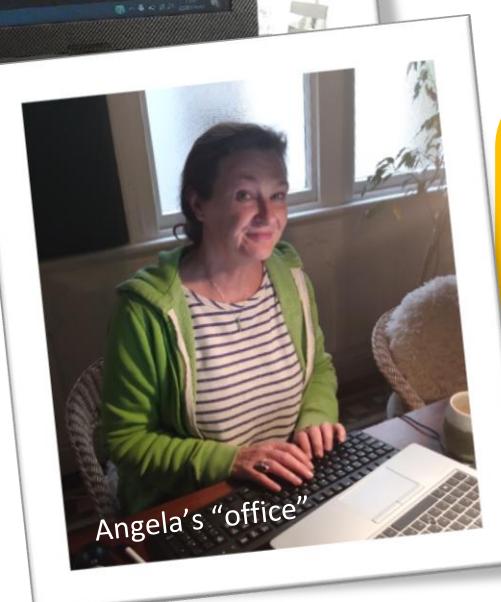
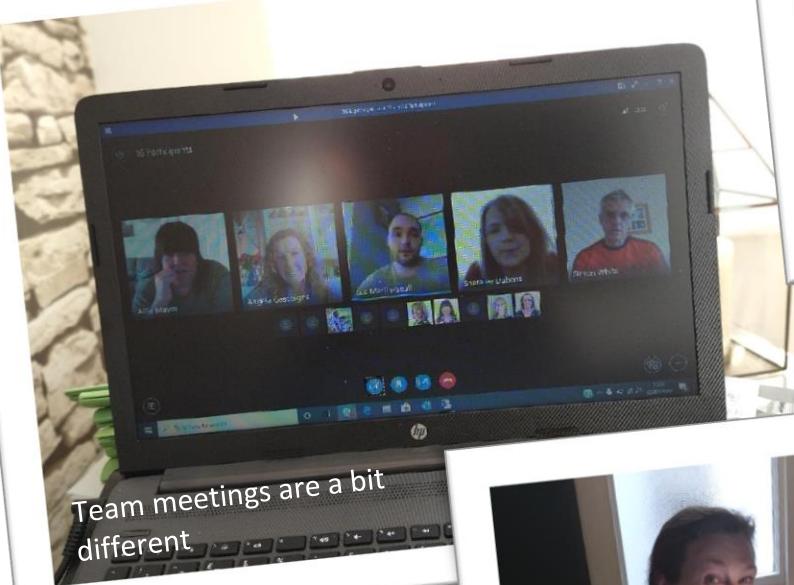
"Most world museums will offer virtual tours. I virtually visited museums via [www.businesstraveller.com](http://www.businesstraveller.com) but you can access them via google."

"You can also access them from the museum's website including The Louvre, The Van Gogh Museum or The British Museum. I liked The Van Gogh museum."

"The British Museum was very interesting too – and The Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam is also a good one to check. Tate Modern in London has some of their exhibitions available to visit virtually (Andy Warhol for example). My personal favourite The Malbork Castle Museum situated in my home town.

"You can also visit the Eiffel Tower virtually."

*David*



"I've collected snacks, drinks, toiletries, underwear & nighties for the local hospital & I've donated my saved petrol money to a local homelessness charity."

*Angela*

# Competition time! You can win £50 vouchers!

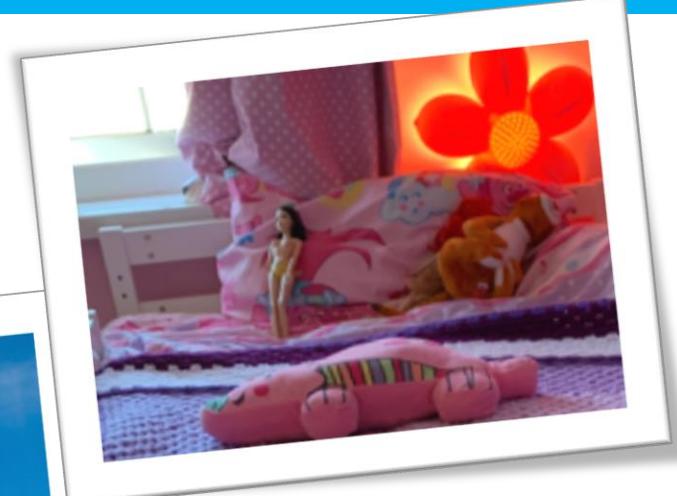
## 1. What did Bertie make for her granddaughter?

- A: Blanket
- B: Birthday cake
- C: Face mask



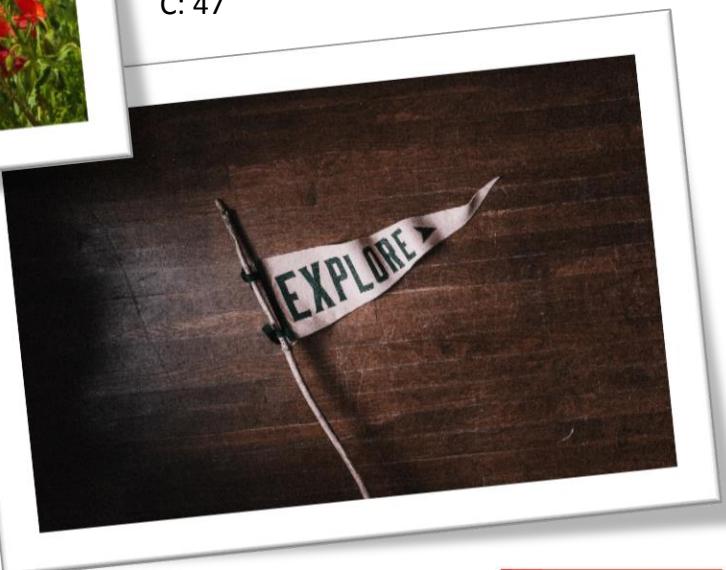
## 3. Which is Dawid's personal favourite museum to visit online?

- A: Tate Modern
- B: Malbork Castle
- C: Van Gogh Museum



## 2. How many poppies are the people in Nether Stowey and Over Stowey making?

- A: 27
- B: 37
- C: 47



You can answer as many questions as you like – you only need to get one right!



Just send the question number and your answer (for example 1A or 1A 2C 3A) along with your name and address to:

Email: [lee@shal.org](mailto:lee@shal.org)

Post: 2 King Square, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 3DG

Text: 07984 355553

**Deadline: 31 May 2020**

The lucky winner of the competition in our last issue was Calie from Bridgwater. The answers were: 1B (40%), 2B (2.7%), 3B (4<sup>th</sup>).