

Breathing Space

December 2025

Newsletter



Breathing Space – A Little Calm This Christmas

Breathing Space is a voluntary support service for parents in Torbay who've had a child removed from their care.

We're here to help you feel stronger, more confident, and ready for the future. That might mean improving contact with your child, finding stability, or simply having someone to talk to.

Important: Working with Breathing Space is not a stepping stone to having your child returned to your care. Our focus is on helping you make positive changes for yourself and any future children, and to make the most of any contact you have now.

What We Offer

A listening ear and practical support

Help with housing, finances, health, and confidence

Guidance for parenting in the future

Connections to community resources

How to Get Referred

Getting started is simple:

Email us:

Breathing.Space.Service@torbay.gov.uk

Include your name and phone number, and we'll call you for a friendly chat.

Professionals can also refer parents using the same email.



Meet the Team

At Breathing Space, we know life can feel overwhelming, and asking for help takes courage. That's why we've created a safe, non-judgmental space where parents can pause, reflect, and plan for a brighter future. Our service is open to both men and women, and we work alongside you to focus on what matters most to you.

Who We Are

Our team is made up of caring professionals who are here to listen and support you:

- Gemma – Team Manager & Social Worker
- Jane – Social Worker
- Simon, Harriet, Cassie, and Nadia – Lead Family Practitioners

Together, we bring experience, compassion, and a commitment to helping parents feel stronger and more confident about the future.

Why We Do What We Do

We believe that positive change happens when people feel understood and supported—not judged. Our goal is to build lasting relationships based on trust, so you can access the right support and make plans that work for you. Every step we take is about helping you feel hopeful and empowered for what's ahead.



Breathing Space Project – Learning From Experts by Experience

This year, we launched an exciting new project that brought parents and professionals together in a truly collaborative way. We want to take a moment to thank and celebrate the parents who generously offered their time, insight, and lived experience to help us grow in our practice. Their honesty and commitment have helped us all become more compassionate, well-rounded professionals who support families in the way we would all want to be treated—with respect, understanding, and care.

Why This Matters

Listening to parents' voices is powerful. It challenges assumptions, deepens empathy, and reminds us that positive change starts with relationships built on trust. This project has shown that when professionals and parents work together, we create better outcomes for families and stronger communities.

What's Next?

We're thrilled to announce that another Breathing Space Project workshop will run in March 2026. Spaces are limited, so early booking is essential. You can find the course under Torbay iLearn:

A Breathing Space Workshop – Learning From Experts by Experience

Date: 26 March 2026

Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Learning Academy Large Training Room, GF202, Town Hall, Torquay

Seats Available: 13

This workshop is co-produced and co-facilitated with Breathing Space parents who have prior experience of working with Children's Services and child removal through public law care proceedings. It offers a unique opportunity to understand parents' experiences and explore best practice through a relational and restorative approach.

Learning Outcomes

- What good communication looks and feels like
- Understanding the experience of parents
- Identifying positive changes
- What best practice looks like to parents (restorative practice)
- The importance of taking time to build a relationship

Target Audience: All Social Workers (especially ASYEs), and professionals from Health, Schools, and Police who work with parents.

Booking: Visit Torbay iLearn and search for A Breathing Space Workshop – Learning From Experts by Experience.

Event's during December

- **Breathing Space Drop-In Tuesdays**
11:00am -1pm Currently at Endeavour House (Shekinah) 228 Union Street Torquay until further notice.
- **Christmas Artisan Market and Themed Christmas Grotto 14 Dec 2025 10:30 AM - 4:00 PM** Cockington Court
- **Christmas Market and Disco Party 20 Dec 2025 Saturday 13:00 - 16:00** Torquay Town Hall

- **Wellness drop in December 17 @ 11:00 am - 1:00 pm** Endeavour House 228 Union Street Torquay
- **Women's Wellness day December 18 @ 9:30 am - 4:00 pm**, Endeavour House
- **Andy's Man Club December 22 @ 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.** This is a support group (survivors of DV/SV) solely for men. Endeavour House.

Competition Time!

A huge thank you to our generous donors for these amazing prizes:

- 2 tickets to the Model Village
- 2 tickets to Torre Abbey
- 1 family ticket to Torquay Museum

Answer the following questions:

1.What can you see at the Model Village?

- A) Miniature buildings
- B) Roller coasters
- C) Wild animals



2.What can you find at Torre Abbey?

- A) Art and gardens
- B) Roller coasters
- C) Fish tanks



3.What can you learn at Torquay Museum?

- A) History and culture
- B) Swimming lessons
- C) Roller skating



Email your answers to:

Breathing.Space.Service@torbay.gov.uk

Please include:

Your answers

Your mobile number (so we can contact you if you win!)

Closing date: 23rd January 2025

The draw will take place on 23rd January 2025 , and winners will be notified shortly after.

Good luck, and thank you for supporting Breathing Space!

Silly Christmas cracker jokes



1.What do you call an old snowman?
Water.



2.Why did Santa go to music school?

Because he wanted to improve his wrapping skills!

3. Why was the turkey at the Christmas party so proud?
Because it was stuffed!





Easy Mince Pies

225g cold butter diced
350g plain flour
100g golden caster sugar
280g mincemeat
1 small egg beaten
icing sugar to dust

Method



Step 1

To make the pastry, rub the butter into the flour, then mix in the golden caster sugar and a pinch of salt.

Step 2

Combine the pastry into a ball – don't add liquid – and knead it briefly. The dough will be fairly firm, like shortbread dough. You can use the dough immediately, or chill for later.

Step 3

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Line 18 holes of two 12-hole patty tins, by pressing small walnut-sized balls of pastry into each hole.

Step 4

Spoon the mincemeat into the pies. Take slightly smaller balls of pastry than before and pat them out between your hands to make round lids, big enough to cover the pies.

Step 5

Top the pies with their lids, pressing the edges gently together to seal – you don't need to seal them with milk or egg as they will stick on their own. Will keep frozen for up to one month.

Step 6

Brush the tops of the pies with the beaten egg. Bake for 20 mins until golden. Leave to cool in the tin for 5 mins, then remove to a wire rack. To serve, lightly dust with the icing sugar. Will keep for three to four days in an airtight container.



Positive Affirmation for December

"I am stronger than I think, and every step I take brings me closer to the future I deserve."



Mindful Christmas Pause

Take one minute to stop and breathe.

- Inhale slowly and notice the festive scents around you.
- Exhale and let go of any stress.
- Look around and find one thing that makes you smile.

A tiny pause can make the season feel brighter.



Special achievements

Celebrating Parent Achievements



At Breathing Space, we believe every step forward deserves recognition. Many of the parents we work with have shown incredible strength and resilience, and we want to celebrate their achievements as part of our newsletter. These stories remind us why we do what we do—and inspire others to believe that change is possible.

Amy's Journey

Amy has been part of Breathing Space since the very beginning, two years ago. When she first joined, Amy openly says she had very little confidence. Today, she has grown in ways that make us proud.

Here's what Amy shared with us:

*"Last year I completed my peer mentoring training towards the end of 2024. It has given me the motivation to help support other parents who have been through similar experiences with social services and going through court.

I was invited to help at a research café in Plymouth recently. This entailed speaking about how Breathing Space came about, what we have done, and where the service plans to move forward with some upcoming ideas."*

Liz's Journey

Here's what Liz's shared with us:

"Without Breathing Space I would have never had the confidence to fight for my children.... Through them I am now a peer mentor and support other families to live their best lives and give them hope and encouragement to move forward.... no matter how dark and terrifying. I try to give them hope with sharing my story and regain their faith in themselves. Breathing Space has been that light in the darkness and filled the gap that has been missing so long. Their kindness and compassion has regained my faith in humanity and the world we live in today."

Amy and Liz's journeys remind us of the incredible resilience and courage that parents show every day. Their determination to turn challenges into opportunities and to support others along the way is truly inspiring. At Breathing Space, we are proud to walk alongside parents like Amy and Liz—proof that with compassion, guidance, and belief, positive change is always possible.

DIY Cookie Mix in a Jar – Step-by-Step

You'll need:

- 1 clean mason jar (500ml or 1L depending on recipe size)
- Ingredients for the cookie mix:
 - 1 cup flour
 - ½ tsp baking soda
 - ½ tsp salt
 - ½ cup brown sugar
 - ½ cup white sugar
 - ½ cup chocolate chips (or other mix-ins like raisins)
- Ribbon or twine
- A gift tag with baking instructions

Steps:

1. Layer the dry ingredients in the jar:
 - First, add the flour (mixed with baking soda and salt).
 - Next, gently add the brown sugar, pressing lightly to keep layers neat.
 - Then add the white sugar.
 - Finally, top with chocolate chips.
2. Seal the jar with the lid tightly.
3. Decorate:
 - Tie a festive ribbon or twine around the jar.
 - Add a gift tag that says: "To bake: Empty jar into a bowl. Add ½ cup softened butter, 1 egg, and 1 tsp vanilla. Mix well. Bake at 180°C for 10-12 minutes."





Christmas Can Be Hard – We're Here for You

We know that for many of our parents, Christmas can be a really challenging time. Please remember, you're not alone. Breathing Space is here if you need someone to talk to or just a friendly face. Feel free to reach out to us by email:

Breathing.Space.Service@torbay.gov.uk

If things feel overwhelming or you're in crisis, please make sure you use the services available. Here are some important numbers to keep handy:

Local Support (Torbay)

NHS Mental Health Crisis Line: Call 111 and select the mental health option (24/7)

Torbay Emergency Duty Service: 0300 456 4876 (out of hours social work support)

Torbay Community Helpline: 01803 446022 (Mon-Fri 10am-6pm)

The Moorings (Torquay Crisis Café): 07483 991 848 (10am-6pm, virtual 6pm-midnight)



National Helplines

Samaritans: 116 123 (free, 24/7)

Shout Crisis Text Line: Text SHOUT to 85258 (free, 24/7)

Mind Info Line: 0300 123 3393 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)

SANEline: 0300 304 7000 (4:30pm-10pm daily)

Papyrus HOPELINE247 (under 35): 0800 068 4141

National Suicide Prevention Helpline UK: 0800 689 5652



This Christmas, take care of yourself. If you need us, we're here and if you need urgent help, please reach out to these services. You are not alone.



Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from the Breathing Space Team

As we come to the end of 2025, we reflect on a year filled with growth, change, and incredible moments. We've welcomed many new faces into our team, each bringing fresh energy and passion to the work we do.

This season also brings a bittersweet farewell to our manager, Gemma Abrey. Gemma was the heart and soul behind Breathing Space—the person who brought this vision to life. Her dedication and compassion have touched countless lives, and her legacy will continue to inspire us every day. Gemma, thank you for everything. You will be deeply missed, but never forgotten. We wish you all the happiness and success in your next chapter.

Looking ahead, we're excited to welcome Lisa Pitcher as our new manager. With Lisa's leadership, we're hopeful for a bright and impactful 2026—a year where we continue to make a difference for the parents we support and create memories that matter.

From all of us at Breathing Space, thank you for being part of this journey. Wishing you peace, joy, and love this festive season and beyond.

