



May 2021 Bulletin



It's almost **Volunteer Week 2021** and this year as always it's an opportunity to say thank you to our invaluable team.

MHNE have recruited some fantastic new and returning volunteers to make sure that our countryside venue, Muddy Boots, is ready for visitors at the end of June. In addition we have our fabulous online / admin volunteers and managers who help to keep MHNE afloat.

The volunteer gangs at Muddy Boots (some of them shown in photos below) are:



Clean Up Squad - Jake, Leo and Archie featured - Ages between 8 years and 12 years.
"We do the important stuff around here - the other gangs couldn't work without us!"

Painting Gang - Mainly teens and early 20 year olds:
"Our gang are the artists - just take a look at the Summerhouse."

Engineers - The Inbetweeners: "Our job is to construct the new facilities at Muddy Boots".

Gardeners - Over 80s who are filling the poly tunnel with a variety of new plants. Steve says "It is the best night's sleep I ever get after a session in the poly tunnel" and Edna just can't wait for her next visit.

Whatever your age volunteering can be good for you while helping others at the same time. All our volunteers state that they feel fitter after a day in the countryside.



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MHNE Volunteer Tor Helping to Green Youth Club

One of our volunteer gardeners, Tor, requested some of the plants we have been cultivating at Muddy Boots for a project she is working on at **Oxhill Youth Club** (Stanley, County Durham).

Tor is a participant with the Prince's Trust and as part of her qualification she is helping to improve the youth club's garden space.

So far the group have cleared away rubbish and made the space more presentable. The overall plan is to convert the outside into a lovely, vibrant area filled with flowers and other plants that can be enjoyed by groups that frequent the facility.



There are plans to add a seating area as well as potentially a vegetable patch and small herb garden, depending on recourses. This aspect of the project will last for three weeks.

The photo above shows Tor (centre), holding some of the plants MHNE were able to pass on. Either side of Tor are course facilitators Shawn and Jon.

When we dropped off the plants, we could see that Shawn, Tor and the gang they are working with are doing an amazing job renovating the greenery around the club.

Mental health carers journey – Care to hear my voice too?



FREE Event on Thursday June 10th from 10:30-11:30am

This event is planned to coincide with Carers Week 2021 and the theme of the week is **Making Carers Visible**. You will hear directly from adult carers who care for someone who has problems with their mental health.

What will you get from taking part?

- A deeper understanding of a carers experience within mental health and the kind of conversation they would welcome with you.
- Knowledge about the services Newcastle Carers can offer including: support groups, individual support, grants, employment support.
- A better understanding of how to identify and recognise carers and the kind of help you can signpost them to.
- More confidence about speaking to carers.

For tickets, go to: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/mental-health-carers-journey-care-to-hear-my-voice-too-tickets-154424934135>

Mentally Sound: Life in Lockdown Radio Show and Podcast

Mentally Sound is an award winning radio show, recorded as a podcast on a weekly basis, and broadcast on Spice FM each Tuesday from 1pm repeated Saturdays at 3pm. Originally set up as a peer support project on community radio supported by MHNE, MHM and Launchpad in 2015, it was rebranded as **Life in Lockdown** due to the COVID situation and over 50 podcasts have been produced since March 2020.

In the 54th show, broadcast this month, Ricky chatted with a GP, Dr Anita Raja, talking all things Mental Health, with a focus on the effect of the pandemic her NHS colleagues and wider healthcare staff.

Previous Mentally Sound shows are available to stream or download:

In Episode 53, Mwenza & Katy of Newcastle/ Elswick Mutual Aid highlight their phone box-larder petition and helping out west end citizens.

Graham Brewis of Clean Slate Financial Wellbeing Services talks addiction, finance & debt in lockdown. <https://clyp.it/ph5mok0s>

In Episode 52, resident therapist Amer Mirza joins Ricky for a full hour's special on children's mental health. They look at counselling in schools, trauma, grief, peer support, and different forms of therapy. <https://clyp.it/0jftq3hp>

Episode 51 Ricky asks 'Why are British Indians reluctant to open up about their mental health?' As part of a post-graduate study, the show attempts to answer this for the whole hour, looking at language, culture and lifestyle. <https://clyp.it/kdvqcuqt>

Please contact Ricky Thamman on their new email address mentallysound@spicefm.co.uk if you would like to get in touch or be involved with a future show. Find Mentally Sound on Twitter [@_mentallysound](#) and [Facebook](#) for the very latest show information and download links.

Archived #LifeInLockdown podcasts can be found on Spotify, Clyp, Apple and Pocket Casts.



MHNE Can Now Receive Donations via JustGiving

Donations to MHNE support our work, maintain and grow our outdoor training facilities and strengthen our campaigning voice for the region.

The new Mental Health North East page on JustGiving has been created to make this process much easier for the individuals and organisations who decide to help financially or wish to set up a fundraising event online.



To find our Donations home page please follow this link: <https://www.justgiving.com/mhne>

Keith's Lockdown Diaries: Durham Countywide Forum

MHNE is proud to support the Durham Countywide Mental Health Service Users & Carers Forum (also known as the Countywide Forum or CWF). Keith Phillips, the group's chair has been giving us regular updates on the comfort he gets from spending time on his allotment over the seasons of lockdown. **This month Keith writes:**



"It's a busy time in the allotment. Spring is here, although the weather has made growing more difficult than usual. Seedlings are ready to be planted outside. I put up some netting this year to protect the young cabbages. I will start cucumbers and courgettes as soon as the temperature allows. Spring onions and Spinach are sprouting. Weeds and grass are growing quickly too, because of the recent rain and warm-ish weather.



I am looking forward to travelling further and meeting people again. There are many places I would like to go this year, which have been closed for some time. However I am careful to go to the quieter places for now, later this year I may be confident to go to busier places."

Durham Countywide Forum is a group of Service Users and Carers based in County Durham and Darlington. The brief of the group is to improve and promote Mental Health in that area.

The group look at general issues facing service users and carers. We have flagged up issues such as Stigma and Discrimination in County Durham. There is a very active anti-stigma group now. The anti-stigma group is supported by Durham County Council. The CWF doesn't take on individual cases, although the members have knowledge of places to find help and/or advice.



Many people acknowledge that Coronavirus has affected people's mental health and NHS services. For this reason the CWF is particularly interested to hear about your experiences during the last 12 months.

The Countywide Forum is always seeking new members, especially people with an interest or having experience of Mental Health in County Durham and Darlington.

The group plans to resume its open meetings in Durham City in June at the Waddington Street Centre, 3 Waddington Street, DH1 4BG.

Please contact Peter Smith psmith@waddingtoncentre.co.uk or phone 0191 3860702 for more details, including minutes and agendas of the Forum.

Aspire's Stay Safe Feel Well Group is a Huge Success



The Stay Safe Feel Well (SSFW) group is a small, Covid safe, group of 4 to 5 women running with a 6 week rolling intake. It is provided under Aspire's initiative around suicide and self harm, which also covers the monthly online Suicide and Self Harm Drop-In sessions in Chester-le-Street.

The SSFW group is for women who are experiencing low mood, anxiety and depression. Some may have had suicidal thoughts or have experienced knowing someone who has attempted suicide. Attendees face these difficult experiences though a mood diary, which they decorate themselves. Inside they select a word each week to describe how they are feeling and create a piece of art to represent this.

As the women work they discuss issues that have caused them trauma or worries they may be experiencing. This offers the opportunity for women to peer support each other and share their experiences in a safe and non-judgemental space. At the end of the sessions the women show each other their work and discuss the words they have chosen.

During the 6 weeks of the SSFW group the women experience several trips out for short walks and stop in the community for a coffee - weather permitting. This experience supports general mental and physical health but is also about tackling anxieties about socialising and returning to community spaces following the isolation of lockdowns.



At the end of the 6 weeks each of the women attending produces a piece of art to describe what Aspire means to them. The diary helps the group to look back over the previous weeks and see the progress that has been made. The new intake will consist of women who are on the SSFW waiting list and women who require continued support.

If you are interested in the Stay Safe Feel Well Programme or any of Aspire women's support services (in person and online) please email: sisters@aspire-northeast.co.uk

You can visit the Aspire website here: <https://www.aspire-northeast.co.uk/>

Reports

Covid-19 and the nation's mental health (Centre for Mental Health)



A new briefing from the Centre for Mental Health “Covid-19 and the nation’s mental health” confirms that as many as 10 million people (8.5 million adults and 1.5 million children and young people) in England will need support for their mental health as a direct result of the pandemic over the next three to five years. This number of people is around three times higher than current service capacity.

The report concludes that urgent investment is needed and that Government and the NHS must take action now to meet a very steep increase in demand. <https://centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/covid-19-and-nations-mental-health-may-2021>

National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health

Two reports were published this month from the National Confidential Inquiry into Suicide and Safety in Mental Health (NCISH)

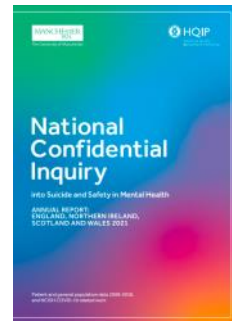
The **NCISH Annual Report** provides detailed findings and analysis relating to people who died by suicide (2008-2018) across all UK countries.

The report, key message sheets and an overview in video form are available on their website: <https://sites.manchester.ac.uk/ncish/reports/annual-report-2021-england-northern-ireland-scotland-and-wales/>

The second report is **Suicide by middle-aged men**. Men in mid-life have the highest suicide rates in the UK and the report examines factors associated with suicide in this group, including how frequently suicide was preceded by specific events.

For example nearly half of all patient suicides lived alone at the time of death. These patients were more often aged over 45, unemployed, single/widowed, and had experienced recent financial difficulties & relationship break-up more often than those who did not live alone.

There are also recommendations for suicide prevention. The report can be downloaded here: <http://manchester.ac.uk/ncish/reports/>



Bereavement due to Suicide resource updated

A new version of the NHS “Help is at Hand” publication has been released.

It’s an excellent resource to share with the family or friends of someone who may have died by Suicide. You can view and download it here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/suicide/documents/help%20is%20at%20hand.pdf>

Research: Attitudes towards supported housing

Are you a social housing provider?

Do you work with private sector tenants?

Are you an older people's organisation?

Then we would like to hear from you.



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE



Northumbria University Hoarding Research Group, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, in partnership with Gateshead Council is conducting a 12-month research project exploring older people's attitudes towards moving into supported housing. They are working in partnership with Elders Council of Newcastle, Mother Clutter UK, North Tyneside Council and Search Project, Newcastle: organisations who have expertise in housing, working with older people and/or supporting people with hoarding behaviours.

They hope that the research will support development of strategies to better support older people who may be facing this important life transition.

They are looking for organisations to support them to:

- Recruit social housing / private sector tenants aged 50 over wishing to take part in the study.
- Consider potential support needs that participants may have to take part in the study.
- Researchers are particularly interested to explore how hoarding behaviours and social networks influence individual's perceptions of supported housing, so welcome the opportunity to compare experiences of people with hoarding behaviours to those without.
- Participants responses will be dealt with as private and confidential and data will be anonymised.

To find out more about this study, please contact **Claire Murphy-Morgan**, Senior Research Assistant, Hoarding Research Group - Claire.n.murphy-morgan@northumbria.ac.uk

Vacancy



Female Counsellor posts - Rape Crisis Tyneside and Northumberland

Salary FTE £27,741 per annum (NJC pt 23). Fixed term.

There are a range of roles, delivering face-to-face counselling in the central office in Newcastle, and a 1 day per week at an outreach base in South Tyneside. There is also a 24.5 hr post in Northumberland covering a range of outreach bases.

A mixture of home-working for all admin and non-face-to-face based tasks and building-based working for face-to-face counselling. The post may require some evening sessions.

Deadline for applications is Monday 14th June 2021 at 12 noon.

For more information visit <https://rctn.org.uk/ftptcounsellors-2/> or email hstephan@rctn.org.uk

Improving safety and quality in mental healthcare study

Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London

A study to find out more about problems people experience with the safety of their mental healthcare in adult community-based mental health services. This research will help to increase awareness of the types of safety issues service users experience, as well as gathering ideas about how to improve the safety of these services.



Who can take part?

Service users, carers, and healthcare professionals or service managers with experience of community-based mental health services. These include primary care (e.g. treatment and monitoring of a mental health condition by a GP), or secondary care mental health services (e.g. outpatient support from Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment team, or a Community Mental Health Team).

To take part, you must also be:

- Over 18 years old.
- Able to understand English sufficiently to take part in an interview or group discussion.
- Able to provide informed consent.
- Not currently using inpatient mental health services.

Taking part in this study will involve speaking with a researcher in a one-off interview or group discussion about the safety of mental healthcare in the community, from your perspective as either a service user, carer, or healthcare professional. Interviews or group discussions will last for up to one hour and are likely to be conducted remotely.

If you are interested in taking part, or would like more information, contact Phoebe Averill at phoebe.averill@kcl.ac.uk.

If you are a service user or carer, you will be offered a £15 voucher for your participation. "



acorns

Make your voice heard!

North Tyneside Council and Acorns would like to gather your valuable feedback on what you feel is needed from domestic abuse services in the area. This consultation process will support future funding decisions and planning and it is important to us that this is led by our community.

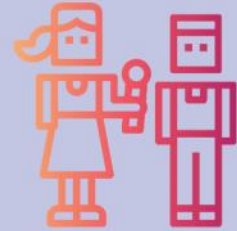
To book a place, email kris@acornsproject.org.uk

Refreshments provided, and we can help with transport costs!

Fri 11th June
10-11.30am
Linskill Centre,
North Shields

LYDIA DUSTBIN

BACK INSIDE THE DUSTBIN



Lydia writes again, after over six years away from this publication. As always the views expressed do not reflect those of MHNE. This time, she takes a Minister to task over the Government's Covid Response.

LD — Good evening I'm Lydia Dustbin and tonight on Back Inside the Dustbin I'm talking to Government Spokesperson Sir Alfred Whistling Sweets.

SA — Good Evening, I would like to point out to avoid any confusion, I am from the Cambridgeshire Whistling Sweets and not the more common Berkshire Swistling Wheats.

LD — Of course. Now first things first I would like to thank Sir Alfred for being the only Government Minister to agree to an interview.

SA — Oh, it's not that I am the only one, you know, it's just happens that the others are all incredibly busy. Half are looking for a fridge for the Prime Minister, and the other half have gone to Barnard Castle for an eye test.

LD — Indeed. Now Sir Alfred you are the Minister for Pandemic Affairs could you take a little time to explain to our viewers what that means and...

SA — Sorry, if I could just interject at this point. I think I should make it clear that I am in no way suggesting that people should go out and have an affair during pandemics. Though some of our scientific advisors have thought it a good idea, it is not Government policy.

LD — I understand that.

SA — If you understand Government policy you're a much better person than I.

LD — Sir Alfred you have in the past been critical of the Prime Minister in fact going so far as to call him a clown.

SA — Now hold on a moment. Typical bloody journalist, don't put words in my mouth. I don't say he's a clown because he's Prime Minister or suggest that he's Prime Minister because he's a clown, but he is Prime Minister and he is a clown. Now why not ask me what we've been doing to combat the pandemic.

LD — What have you been doing?

SA — Bugger all!!

LD — So what about the Prime Minister's promise of a world beating track and trace system.

SA — Ahh! Well we do have as you say a world beating track and trace system. The trouble is we've lost track of it, nor can we find a trace of the bloody thing! It also completely beats us and everyone else where in the world the bloody thing has got to. That's why we kept the borders open, allowing people to come into the country and are now allowing people to travel overseas, because we're hoping someone might come across it somewhere and drop it into number ten on the way home.

LD — I see. So can you tell our viewers Sir Alfred, the Government's plan to tackle the new variants of Covid-19 that have arisen to avoid a possible third wave.

SA — Haven't a clue, no one tells me bugger all. though I do know we have some catchy slogans for Ministers to repeat at every given opportunity.

In my opinion of course we'll just beggar about using band aid solutions such as surge testing to con the public into thinking we're doing something. Then we'll take the action everyone else has suggested previously when it's far too late of course.

LD — Why would that be?

SA — Well you see a section of our backbenchers are demanding that the Prime Minister starts acting in the best traditions of the party and puts economics before people. Of course you know a third wave, for people like me will be a golden opportunity to make flipping great wads of cash, lobbying for Government contracts to cronies for the supply of vaccines, non-existent PPE and unusable track 'n' trace apps etc. Then of course when it all goes wrong we'll simply blame someone else for squandering public funds.

LD — Sir Alfred Whistling Sweets, with people like you in charge God help us all. Thank you and Goodnight.

Lydia Dustbin is of course the “nom de plume” of one of our volunteers who likes to write and preach satire whenever they remember our email address. Lydia welcomes all reader comments, as long as they are received on a stamped-addressed bow-tie.

I'm afraid we may hear more from Lydia in the months ahead...



COURSES AND ACTIVITIES — MANY ONLINE

ARCH Recovery college Online (TEWV) - [details here](#).

Crisis (Newcastle) - [Timetable and more details](#).

Durham County Council Adult Learning and Skills Service — [current courses](#)

Gateshead Clubhouse — <https://gatesheadclubhouse.com/>

NT LIFE Recovery College (North Tyneside) — [college details here](#)

PACT House— <https://en-gb.facebook.com/PACTHouseStanley/>

PCP (Newton Aycliffe) — [activities list](#)

ReCoCo (Newcastle and Gateshead) — click here for [online courses](#).

St. Margaret's Centre (Durham) — <http://www.stmargaretscentre.co.uk/>

Sunderland Recovery College—<https://www.sunderlandrecoverycollege.com/>

Waddington Street Centre (Durham) — <https://www.waddingtoncentre.co.uk/>

Wellbeing for Life (County Durham) — <https://www.wellbeingforlife.net/training-courses/>

FREE online classes for Older Adults and Carers

Unforgettable Experiences (UE) provide creative experiences for older adults with mental health issues, neurological conditions or dementia and their carers by engaging them in artistic sessions online.



Digital Activity Buddies provide support to help you to get online, with technical expertise to help you with any challenging activities twice a week. There are a wide range of arts activities including history, photography, creative writing, performing arts and dance. New National Lottery funding will allow UE to roll out additional online creative programmes to older people in the Tees Valley

This service is FREE and open to anyone across the North East, all you need to do is get in touch on with their Darlington office on 01325 238007 or email info@unforgettableexperiences.org.uk

For more information you can also visit www.unforgettableexperiences.org.uk

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR GROUP, ORGANISATION OR WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH

Please get in touch if you would like us to feature your work in a future bulletin.
Our contact details can be found on the back page.



Our upcoming online classes:

Thursdays @ 6pm-7:30pm

24th June	Embodied self-awareness
8th July	Mind calm sessions and emotional freedom technique
22nd July	Being true to yourself: relationships and boundaries
12th August	Food and mood
26th August	Distress Tolerance
9th September	Working with the Inner Critic
23rd September	Using the power of The Inner Coach

If you would like to attend any of these, please email: enquiries@niwe.org.uk

Or visit the NIWE website <https://www.niwe.org.uk/>



FOREST FOLK

Woodland Wellbeing day

@Chopwell Woodland Park on the last Sunday of the month Starting 30th May 10-3 (free pickup from Newcastle)

Spending time in a forest with friends, connecting with the natural world and learning new skills reduces anxiety, raises self-esteem and improves wellbeing.

Come and join us for our monthly meet-up in the woods - cook lunch on an open fire, try some crafts, meet new people and relax in nature.

These FREE sessions are for adults (18+) with mental health needs, you will need to register with us first before you can book a place.

For more info or to register:
hello@northeastwilds.org / 07713642169



Forestry England

About Us

Mental Health North East (MHNE) is a unique network of member organisations, formed in 2005 to promote joint working and partnership across the not for profit mental health sector in the North East of England.

MHNE offers access to over 450 voluntary and community organisations working in the field of mental health and wellbeing in the North East, Cumbria and North Yorkshire.

Our organisation is built around a core belief that a strong, vibrant, diverse yet united voluntary and community sector is essential for the development of mental health services and for the improvement of the emotional health and wellbeing of this region. MHNE works collectively with members to improve and protect mental health service provision.

We pride ourselves on having an open mind to innovative approaches which will enable people suffering from mental distress to move towards recovery.



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[https://www.facebook.com/groups/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MentalHealthNE/)

[MentalHealthNE/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/MentalHealthNE/)

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