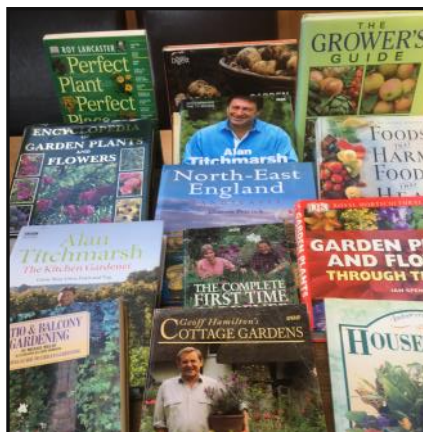




Step by Step and with Care, We Are Almost Ready to Open Up

- ★ This month we report on one of our Young People’s Group who bravely spoke on BBC local radio about his experiences of depression during lockdown, and how speaking out to family and teachers at school led to a path of diagnosis and help to get well (page 3).
- ★ Mentally Sound reaches it’s milestone 50th “Life in Lockdown” broadcast on Spice FM.
- ★ And Mental Health North East’s library of farming and gardening books at Muddy Boots is now complete (photo below) thanks to a kind donation by supporter David Schoon.

We continue to receive donations and while not all donors wish to be thanked publicly we welcome and are very grateful for all help we receive, whether it is financial, volunteer time, materials or equipment used to improve the facilities allowing us to re-open safely.



Update from Our Open Letter to North East MPs on Mental Health Funding

We have been back in touch with MPs who had responded to our open letter to our regional representatives requesting increased funding for Mental Health services in the North East. **Sir Alan Campbell MP (Tynemouth)** forwarded a letter he received in reply from the Steve Barclay MP at HM Treasury, setting out general spending commitments from Government which were made in the most recent spending review. There was nothing in the response about the North East region, despite his letter of reply referring to MHNE’s request directly.

Photo: Volunteers help with the erection of a new greenhouse, as work continues to prepare the Muddy Boots site.



Inside this April Issue

Spencer's Story on BBC Newcastle	3
Various updates	4-7
Jobs	8
Courses and Flyers	9-16
MHNE Contacts	14

Photos on cover:

(top) The beach at Berwick-upon-Tweed.

(left) **Quiz question**—can you identify the contraption shown in the photo? What was it used for? Answer can be found below.

(centre) Some new books in our horticulture library kindly donated by David.

(right) Getting the polytunnel ready for the MHNE Summer Visitors.

Answer: A Turnip Cutter!



Twitter: [@mhnetweets](https://twitter.com/mhnetweets) and young people [@mhne_yp](https://twitter.com/mhne_yp)



Facebook Group



Spencer from MHNE Young People's Group speaks about his experience in BBC Radio Newcastle Report

Martin Lindsay produced a report for BBC Newcastle featuring Spencer one of our [MHNE Young People's group](#) from Sunderland. Martin found that there has been a significant rise in children being referred for depression in the North East during the pandemic.

NHS data researched for the BBC report showed that there were almost 300 referrals in the last four months of 2020 - up from 172 for the same time in 2019.

BBC Radio Newcastle also spoke to families who have been affected including Spencer, aged 16, who explained how lockdown had affected him, and that it was through seeking help he was able to get a diagnosis for symptoms of depression and the right support.

“My friends are great listeners, I used to speak to them about how I felt and that helped us — and not being able to speak to them or see them through lockdown felt like I was shut away from them, like ropes cut away from me. I’d never felt like this before, depression drains the energy out of you so that you don’t want to do anything. I was having horrible thoughts and feelings and wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy.”

“But it is okay to not be OK. Find that one bit of strength and go and speak to someone. That one conversation could set you off on a journey that could make you happier.”

MHNE are extremely proud of Spencer’s decision to tell his story— his clear explanation of how ill he felt and of reaching out to seek help—has already been used to help other young people and parents in making the decision to speak to someone before things get worse.

A recent article in the Guardian looks at the recent figures and how young people have been affected by the pandemic and other factors if you would like to know more:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2021/apr/12/the-guardian-view-on-mental-health-this-emergency-requires-a-response>

Members of our Young People’s Group have been volunteering at our Muddy Boots training site to help to get everything ready for re-opening (see photos earlier this bulletin). We are hoping to publish a new issue of our [“Reach-Out” Young People’s bulletin](#) later in the year which will include more of their thoughts and experiences in this very different world.

The BBC report is available to listen to until the end of April (you will need to log in to BBC-iPlayer to hear the recording): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/p09d2c2v>



REPLANTING FOR A BETTER FUTURE



Design your Day

We take individuals and groups into the countryside to reconnect with and experience nature, to assess the impact of lockdown and review positive ways forward.

Our venue is Muddy Boots Horticultural Centre, situated in beautiful countryside near the famous Beamish Museum, Causey Arch and Tanfield Railway.

A menu of activities to choose from to make your day truly special:



- Try your Hand at Horticulture
- Guided Walks around the Countryside
- Crafts and Music
- Proggy mat-making
- Exercise and Guided Meditation



For an informal chat or if your organisation would like to book a day, please contact us marking your email Muddy Boots Day lyn.boyd@mhne.org.uk or call 0191 411 1962

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 now 50 podcasts have been produced in the year since March 2020.

In the milestone 50th show broadcast this month, Ricky will be chatting to 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.

In Episode 49, Claire Laydon of Healthworks in Newcastle's west end talked about our mental/physical health, and friends of the show Walk and Blether talked about vaccines jabs and lockdown easing.



Previous shows now available to stream / download:

In Episode 48, resident therapist Amer gives his take on peoples psychology towards lockdown easing, and, in tribute to our late friend Fiona Teasdale, we play a previous interview we did with her & Dean at the Blaydon Shed : <https://clyp.it/ap4h05ba>

Episode 47, we chat to Alisdair Cameron, and how ReCoCo dealt with lockdown, and their plans for the future. Also Sarah Wood from the Emergency Carers Card service of Newcastle/ Northumberland British Red Cross, and how they help local carers : <https://clyp.it/1ebiqjd1>

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

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



New guidance to support the return of in-person events and community fundraising

The Chartered Institute of Fundraising has published guidance on planning and providing in-person events and community fundraising activities (including cash collections) in a safe and responsible way, as the Government Roadmap to easing pandemic restrictions progresses.

The up to date guidance from the ClfF can be found by [following this link](#).

Lockdown Diaries: Keith Philips- Durham Countywide Forum

MHNE is proud to support the Durham County Wide 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:**



“The weather is improving from winter-time, and I have prepared most of the soil at the allotment to plant seedlings. Some seeds need a time of cool temperatures before they will grow. There are some seedlings in the greenhouse where they will get sunlight during the day. I'm careful about putting seeds outside for now, it's frosty at night. It's very good weather to be doing some of the heavier jobs such as weeding and digging with the sun shining but not too warm.

It's good to get out of the house and into the garden, or to go for a walk. Winter can be a difficult time, even without a lockdown.

The Muddy Boots project will be re-starting soon. Most of the County Wide Forum are going along for a visit. Please [check the MHNE website](#) for more details.”

The County Wide Forum is a lively 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. The CWF is particularly interested to hear about your experiences during the last 12 months, as well as during previous years.

The group is seeking new members, in particular people who have an interest or experience of Mental Health in County Durham and Darlington. Training in some meeting skills could be organised when the courses are available.

While the group isn't meeting at present, it will meet in Durham City when circumstances allow (usual venue: 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.



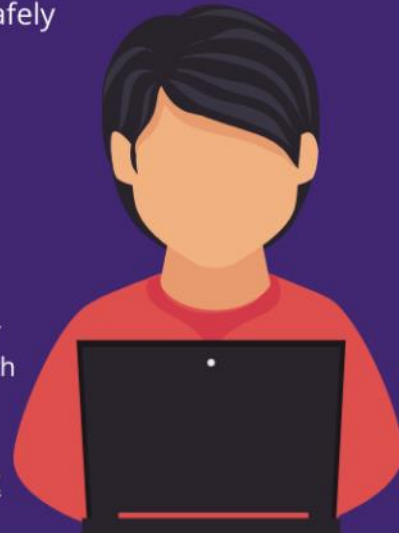
COME AND JOIN OUR WEEKLY WOMEN'S SUPPORT AND SOCIAL GROUPS

Safe, friendly women only groups, free to join and safely facilitated by our trained volunteers

- **Monday Social - 11.15-12.15**
- **Mature Friends (women aged 50+) Mon 10-11**
- **Positive Changes - Tues 1-2**
- **Positive Progress - Weds 1-2**

A great opportunity to socialise, feel supported, share your experiences, learn new ways to handle life and connect with other women

Email to register: sisters@aspire-northeast.co.uk



National Suicide Prevention Strategy—Fifth progress report

A few weeks ago, the fifth progress report of the **Suicide Prevention Strategy for England**, detailing the steps taken to reduce deaths by suicide since the fourth report published by government in January 2019.

The [report which can be found here](#) sets out:

- data and evidence the government currently has on suicide and self-harm
- progress made against existing commitments designed to prevent suicides and self-harm
- further actions for government and its agencies, particularly in the context of COVID-19

The report also sets out a refreshed cross-government suicide prevention workplan.

SPOTLIGHT ON YOUR GROUP, ORGANISATION OR WORK IN MENTAL HEALTH

We are particularly interested in organisations who want to promote work to support communities and vulnerable people through this difficult time.

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.

Jobs



Because growing up can be hard

Mental Health Youth Worker Children North East [Newcastle]

Contract: Temporary Hours / Part –time

£20,708-£22,583

Closing date 12pm Friday 30th April 2021

Children North East Young Peoples Service require two 16 hour Mental Health Youth Workers to support the delivery of a new and exciting project. Supporting young people, who are either pre or post diagnosis of a Neurodiversity condition such as autism.

Application form and more details: <http://www.children-ne.org.uk/work-with-us/vacancies>

Please contact the Young Peoples Service Manager Ricky Murray if you have any questions regarding the role on 0191 2733997 or ricky.murray@children-ne.org.uk

Health and Wellbeing Coordinator (Durham Community Action)

Full-time role, initially home-based, towards a mix of home and office-based working at Low Willington, County Durham. **Salary: £30,000 p.a.**

The role is for an experienced practitioner to develop relationships between VCS and community groups, and outreach health and social care staff, particularly social prescribing links workers, and other professionals who are connecting people to community-based support.



Closing date: 12 noon on Tuesday 4 May 2021. For full details and how to apply:

<https://www.durhamcommunityaction.org.uk/vacancies.html/301/>

Carer Information and Advice Worker [Carers Northumberland]



Salary: £23,735 (pro-rata, actual salary £19,244.59)

30 hours per week – Monday–Friday (negotiable)

Based at: Central Office, 107 & 109 Station Road, Ashington, NE63 8RS

Carers Northumberland is seeking to appoint a Carer Information and Advice Worker to provide information, advice, guidance and support to unpaid carers in Northumberland, understanding their needs and supporting them to access services, activities and groups to improve their wellbeing. The postholder will be required to travel to meetings and events throughout Northumberland and due to the nature of the county own transport is needed.

Closing date for applications: 5pm on Tuesday 4th May 2021

To download an application pack please see: <https://carersnorthumberland.org.uk/vacancies> or email recruitment@carersnorthumberland.org.uk



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/>

Click here for [April—May Reopening](#) information.

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/>

Call. To. Action.

2021

Mental Health Awareness Week 10th-16th May

SOUTH
TEES
WELLBEING
NETWORK



Are you planning any activities
across the TEES area for this
awareness week in line with
the theme of

Connecting with Nature?

If the answer is yes, please e-mail details of
your activity to Jo Cook who is collating and
sharing the activities.



Joanne_Cook@middlesbrough.gov.uk



'WELCOME TO DRAMA' (TAKE 2)

A NEW ONLINE DRAMA COURSE WITH CONVERGE AT
NORTHUMBRIA UNIVERSITY

Wednesday 5th May

6 weeks 3.30-5.30

Our courses are for anyone who is 18+ accessing Mental Health support

To enrol, or for further information please contact
Ally2.hunter@northumbria.ac.uk / 07468700881

The Converge logo is a registered trademark of York St John University



TRAINING FOR CARERS APRIL- JUNE 2021

We have the following training and information sessions planned to support carers in their caring role.

Carers Assessments - Thursday 22nd April (6 -7pm)

Many carers find it easier to continue in their caring role if they can get some support. Join us to find out more about the process and how it could be of benefit to you.

Caring and Me - Thursday 6th and 13th May (10am - 11.30am)_

These sessions provide an opportunity for you to take some time out and consider your own needs, so that you feel more able to cope with the demands of your caring role.

Commonsense Confidentiality - Tuesday 11th May (6-8pm)

Join us for this session, if you are caring for someone who uses NHS Mental Health services. You will find out about the Commonsense Confidentiality Policy which will empower you to request the information you need to continue caring.

Communicating with Confidence - Tuesday 15th June (2-4pm)

This session will help carers to feel more in control of their situation when communicating with professionals and other people involved in the caring process.

Coping with Caring - starting on Wednesday 14th April for five weeks (6-8pm)

These sessions are for carers who are supporting someone who has a Mental Health condition. You will learn how to support behaviour change and have an opportunity to meet and share experiences with other carers who understand.

To sign up:

0191 643 2298

training@ntcarers.co.uk

Follow Us On Social Media



North Tyneside Carers' Centre

@NTCarers





Y'S GIRLS MENTORING

Enabling girls to belong
contribute and thrive

Have you ever wanted to support girls and young women?

Has anyone ever told you that you are a good listener?

Have you overcome challenges in your life?

If yes, you could be an incredible volunteer mentor through our 'Y's Girls' Mentoring Programme at YMCA North Tyneside!

Y's Girls Mentoring aims to offer support and positively influence the lives of young girls aged 9-14, through regular long term mentoring sessions.

Mentoring is an amazing opportunity to share your skills and experience, learn about yourself and give something back to your local community. Research showed that mentoring **improved the confidence of 96% of girls**, whilst helping them focus more at school and feel more positive about the future. **It is a great way to encourage and support young girls to believe in themselves!**

If you feel you would be a **good role model** and can commit to volunteering 2 hours a week over 12 months, please contact Kirsty on **07368917070** or email: **kirsty.brettell@ymcanorthtyneside.org** to find out more.

Full training and support will be provided and hours are flexible around volunteers current commitments.

Just turn up ... no need to book and it's free



PeerTalk®

GATESHEAD

Peer Support Group
for those living with
depression, anxiety
and related conditions

EVERY MONDAY 7.00pm – 8.30pm

Bensham Grove
Community Centre
Sidney Grove, Bensham
Gateshead NE8 2XD.

Facing
Depression
Together

PeerTalk®

Find out more at:

- 📞 07719 562 617
- 🌐 peertalk.org.uk
- 🐦 @peer_talk
- 📘 @peertalk1
- ✉ enquiries@peertalk.org.uk
- 🏠 peertalkcharity



HM Government

Partnership with
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND

The PeerTalk Charitable Foundation: registered charity no. 1146010

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.



Contacting us

Mental Health North East
Birtley CDC,
Drum Park Lane Industrial Estate
Chester Le Street
Co Durham
DH2 1AE

0191 411 1962

lyn.boyd@mhne.org.uk

neil.kelly@mhne.org.uk

Find us Online:

www.mhne.org.uk

[@MHNEtweets](https://twitter.com/MHNEtweets)

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

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

For further information about our bulletin or to place information in any future issues please contact:

beth.boyd@mhne.org.uk

Charity Number: 1119652

Company Number: 5552172

This issue edited by Gareth Cooper



Lyn Boyd

**Chief Executive
Officer**



Neil Kelly

Chairperson