



Many Hands Make Light Work—Our Dedicated Volunteers!



MHNE would like to thank funders Stanley Area Action Partnership and County Durham Foundation, plus our army of volunteers for the great transformation of our countryside venue.

Volunteers working hard this weekend were: Paul, Nola, Temby, Gemma, Ann, Jay, Ben, Don and Mikey

The weather hasn't always helped and there is still a lot we'd like to do at the site, but we are getting there!

You never know what you'll see at Muddy Boots!

Our CEO Lyn Boyd hosted a pre-training visit at Muddy Boots with County Durham based charity [Recovering Justice](#).

The visitors saw both a deer and faun but despite taking some wonderful photographs didn't manage to catch these two residents of the dene on camera.

They were much impressed and looking forward to their days at the site.



“Do you care?” MHNE volunteers’ experiences of being carers

During Carers’ Week at the beginning of June we asked several of our team if they could tell us about their caring roles outside MHNE. We hear from four volunteers about their varied experiences, and things they have learned.

In the next issue of the MHNE bulletin, we will feature **Dementia** and would welcome any content or experiences related to this from organisations or individuals, including tips for carers.



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



Facebook Group

“Do you care?” MHNE Volunteers tell us about their varied experiences of being Carers

During Carers Week at the beginning of June we asked several of our team if they could tell us about their caring roles outside MHNE.

We start with a Q&A with Rose, one of our longest serving volunteers who many of you may already know. Rose was recently seriously ill and spent time in coma.



1. How long have you been a volunteer for MHNE and in what capacity?

From around MHNE’s first year, 2005 I think. I currently look after finance but also publicity, events management and general office tasks.

2. Since that time you have become a carer and also been seriously ill yourself - how has your illness affected your life and your ability to care for others?

Recovery has been slow and ongoing, I get angry with myself when I can’t do things but I don’t let it get me down. My illness has changed the way I am able to care for others, such as grandchildren— they have had to grow up quicker and become independent, but they still need supervision

3. What is the most difficult aspect of caring and what is perhaps the most rewarding?

Illness makes it hard to go out and play football with the children because of limited mobility and stamina. It is difficult for me to concentrate upon more than one conversation at once I get tired easily, but they are so understanding, they know what I want to do but can’t. It is rewarding being able to give them advice based on my own life experience.

4. Have you been able to use the skills you have developed as a carer at MHNE?

Yes, I’ve become better at listening, caring and not taking things at face value. It helps with understanding the people we come into contact with.

5. Was it difficult to access support and what is the most effective support you have received?

I’ve had a positive experience with access to support. Support from friends and colleagues making sure that I’m ok, not leaving me out and involving me in social activities, has kept me going,

I help in a carers group (peer support) for people who’ve been in an ICU, the hospital staff are amazing.

I tend to ask a lot of questions and won’t take no for an answer, such as when told I would never walk again by the consultant. It was hard going but I proved them wrong and proving to myself that I wasn’t going to end up on the scrap heap, despite accepting I couldn’t do everything I used to.

Even though I am disabled - some days I can’t physically get up and out of bed, I have a self-motivation keeping me going and dogged determination.

6. Name one thing that would make your life better as a carer?

Easier access to help and facilities without having to jump through so many hoops, and there are often so many delays to the support you need. You’re made to feel you don’t deserve support through the nature of the bureaucracy and you’re not told enough about what you are eligible for.

“Do you care?” - Part 2. MHNE Volunteers tell us about their varied experiences of being Carers

Lyn has also cared for other family members : I shared caring responsibilities for my parents with my siblings, my partner and their partners. We wanted to make sure that the end of their lives was as comfortable and happy as possible. Our family worked well as a team but this period seemed to cover a long time of our lives. The worst parts were finding the right and most appropriate medical and care services but most of the paid carers - working in both care homes and visiting my parent's home were absolutely wonderful people who provided great support on frankly appallingly low wages - they were mainly women who worked many hours and still had to claim benefits. The good times were seeing the pleasure on my parent's face at the antics of some of the tiny members of the family - those moments were priceless.

Caring for someone at a younger age with mental health problems is a totally different experience. The pain you feel knowing what your loved one is going through and being powerless to help is horrendous. Entering the world of mental ill health was a total shock to me. Despite some excellent workers - doctors, nurses etc the services range from very good and effective to badly thought out and totally insufficient to meet the person's needs. Despite that people DO get better from mental ill health. It was also a surprise to know how people who have suffered mental ill health themselves and have a proper understanding of it are often the best support you can get - this is true in my experience at least. I came at first to work and later to volunteer for MHNE as a result of this time. As a result I have met many fantastic people and times - although I still wish I could take away the pain of mental ill health, the people I now count as my friends I wouldn't change for the world.

Jack, another MHNE volunteer, looked after his wife until her death from motor neurone disease. He says 'the last six months were the worst when she was not only deteriorating rapidly and being physically ill but it also impacted on her personality - she became withdrawn and depressed.' Jack praises the Marie Curie Nurses, Health visitor and the carers provided by his local council as well as a volunteer from St Oswald's Hospital who made a big difference. However he was disgusted at the lack of statutory support from social services. After several months of negotiation a much needed chair was delivered but no one knew how to work it and it was never used. When she finally died in hospital it was an awful experience - sitting for long hours alone with no support - not even a cup of tea,

Doreen became a MHNE volunteer about 9 months ago after moving back to the North East from Scotland. She cared for her husband for about 5 years when they lived in Scotland.

The most difficult aspect was getting the care put into place. I looked after him alone for about nearly 3 years until I realised I needed help. The care was good and everyone in Scotland receives personal care free from the Scottish Government. However the paid carers weren't given enough care but still did their best in the available time. Sometimes friends stop coming to see you when you are in a caring situation. I paid separately for careline to allow me to shopping and for my medical appointments - this was a great service!

My husband refused to have respite and also refused the services of a voluntary befriending service - I think this would have made life easier as a carer. Being a carer changed me but because my husband was happy we could still have a warm relationship - this helped me enormously.

Surveys and Studies

Self-Injury Support Survey 2021

Self Injury Support has been supporting people who self injure for over 30 years. They would like to better understand the support you need if you self-injure. The results of this survey will help to improve services and inform training and campaigning work.

Take the survey here. <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/SelfInjurySupport>

It is entirely confidential; you do not have to give your name or contact details unless you would like to take part in a follow-up interview. You do not need to answer all of the questions if some are triggering. Anything you share will be helpful.

If you would like the survey emailed or posted, contact alison.faulkner2@btinternet.com

Helpline: 0808 800 8088 / text: 07537 432444 / email: tessmail@selfinjurysupport.org.uk and web-chat - www.selfinjurysupport.org.uk (all services are open Tues, Weds, Thurs 7pm-9.30pm).

THIS.Institute **Research study on access to secondary mental health**

Researchers at **The Healthcare Improvement Studies Institute**, the University of Cambridge and the McPin Foundation would like to understand how access to secondary mental health services were affected during the pandemic.

In the first stage of the study they interviewed service users, carers and mental health professionals about care during the pandemic. One of the issues discussed was the increasing use of remote care. By remote care they mean care provided by phone or online video consultation.

In this next stage of the study they would like to learn more about what service users and carers think about remote mental healthcare. You will receive a £25 shopping voucher after completing three surveys.

Sign up to join the study: <https://info.thisinstitute.cam.ac.uk/access-to-secondary-mental-health-services-during-and-after-the-pandemic-2>

Children and Young Person's Mental Health Survey



Are you under 25? Do you want to help shape future mental health support for young people? Please take a few minutes to complete this Healthwatch County Durham survey on mental health and share your views! **If you are the parent or carer of a younger child, please feel free to complete the survey with them – every voice matters.**

The survey can be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/MPBYSQD>

Healthwatch County Durham would also like to hear your experiences of local mental health support services for young people. To tell us your views, please email emily.hunter@pcp.uk.net

Reports and Information

The Future of Prison Mental Health Care in England—Centre for Mental Health

Centre for
Mental Health



The future of prison mental health care in England was commissioned by NHS England and NHS Improvement, and shares examples of the good and innovative practice happening in prison mental health services. It also finds notable variation in provision from prison to prison, with a clear lack of psychological therapy offers in some areas and for some categories of prisoners. Sadly, measures taken to protect people from Covid-19 increased the risk to mental health in prisons, and opportunities were missed to offer digital support during the crisis. Wider change is urgently needed to improve mental health among people in prison.

Read the report here:

https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/publication/download/CentreforMentalHealth_TheFutureofPrisonMentalHealthCare_0.pdf

Supporting Emotional Health among people living with long-term conditions



The Ask How I Am report

People with long-term conditions are twice as likely to have a Mental Health problem. But asking how they are doing emotionally can make a huge difference.

The **Ask How I Am** report, produced by Centre for Mental Health and National Voices, is based on interviews with people living with a wide range of long-term physical conditions, including diabetes, arthritis, cancer and heart disease, and looks at the part that the Covid-19 pandemic has played in adding yet more pressure to people's mental health.

As a result of the report, National Voices and Centre for Mental Health launched a campaign, **#AskHowIAm**, which calls for a greater focus on compassionate care for people with long-term conditions. The report includes tips for practitioners on what this can look like:

- Be aware of what help is available to people using your service for their emotional health.
- Give information and advice to help people to manage their condition, and be available when people need help with this.
- Reassure people that it's okay to seek emotional support at any time while living with a long-term condition.
- Show compassion: small gestures of care can help people who are struggling with their mental or physical health.
- Challenge inequality: for people from marginalised and excluded communities there are additional barriers to support and low levels of trust that need to be rebuilt.

Read the report and find out about the campaign here:

<https://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/publications/ask-how-i-am>



New handbook: Prescribing nature for mental health and wellbeing

A new handbook has been created for organisations and providers of Nature on Prescription to help understand how green social prescribing can help people improve mental health and help conditions such as depression, anxiety and stress. The handbook may also be of interest for GPs, link workers and others in this evolving area of green social prescribing,

The free resource, created by researchers at the European Centre for Environment and Human Health at the University of Exeter and PenARC, gives guidance and best practice for organisations providing Nature on Prescription to help them to develop beneficial, safe and sustainable services.

You can request the handbook here:

<https://www.ecehh.org/research/nature-prescription-handbook/>

healthwatch Annual Reports 2020-21

Healthwatch are the independent national champion for people who use health and social care services. They are here to find out what matters to people, and help make sure their views shape the support they need. **They welcome your feedback on mental health treatment and services.**

Our local Healthwatch offices have recently published their annual reports—click on the relevant links for more information:



Healthwatch Sunderland— [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch Newcastle— [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch County Durham— [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch North Tyneside— [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch South Tyneside— [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch Northumberland — [Click here for report.](#)

Healthwatch Darlington — [Click here for report.](#)

Community mental health framework for adults and older adults - new guidance

England **How are things going in the North East?**

Further guidance has been commissioned by NHS England to support the delivery of The NHS Long Term Plan, outlining a new structure for providing integrated community based mental health care that are focused on support, care and treatment. Read here:

<https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/improving-care/nccmh/care-pathways/community-framework>

The importance of including voluntary and community partners in co-producing local community mental health transformation is emphasised throughout and there is a very clear expectation nationally, regionally and locally that implementation will include investment in new VCSE roles and services.

Given the significance of this programme, the North East and North Cumbria (NENC) ICS is **keen to hear about your experience of how things are developing across the North East**. What are your organisation's experiences of how partnership working and co-production are ensured? How is communication and engagement being managed? Do you feel involved in the way things are developing?

<https://www.vonne.org.uk/north-east-and-north-cumbria-nenc-health-and-wellbeing-network>

COVID-19 Northumberland Community Recovery

NCVS have launched a new directory to provide information on the services and activities that are re-starting, new services and to remind people about services that have been running through lockdown and are continuing. You can contact NCVS to add your service.

<https://www.northumberlandcva.org.uk/covid-19/community-response>

Adult AD/HD Support Groups North East

Meetings are re-starting, with some venues and dates to be confirmed.



The next **Middlesbrough** meeting will be THURSDAY 15th July 2021 (6pm).

Venue: Age Concern (ACTS) Dora Dixon House, 29 Beach Road the corner of Anderson Street, South Shields NE33 2QU.

There are also upcoming monthly meetings in **Durham, Newcastle and Middlesbrough** - see their website for up to date details <http://aadhd-ne-uk.weebly.com/>

Or contact Bill Scott—tel: 07856212564 - email: aadhd_ne@yahoo.co.uk

Johann Hari TED Talk—"This could be why you're depressed or anxious"



One of our volunteers highlighted this excellent and moving TED talk on how to view mental health differently. Journalist Johann Hari shared his insights on the causes of depression and anxiety from experts around the world - as well as some potential solutions.

"If you're depressed or anxious, you're not weak and you're not crazy - you're a human being with unmet needs," Hari says. [Follow this link](#) to view the 20 minute talk.

Durham Countywide Forum

Monthly meetings to restart in July

MHNE is proud to support the Durham Countywide Mental Health Service Users & Carers Forum (also known as the Countywide Forum or CWF).

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, flagging up issues such as Stigma and Discrimination in County Durham.

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.

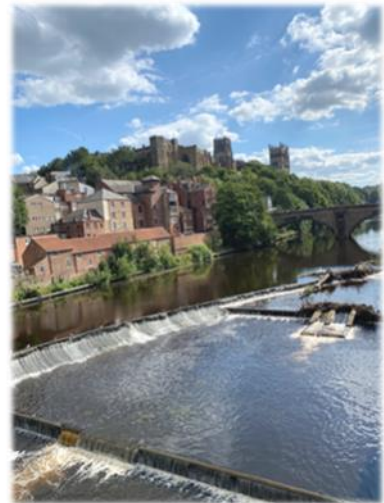
The group have decided to re-commence face to face meetings, with the first monthly meeting of this year being 5th July from 1.30 to 3.30pm.

On the Agenda for the July meeting: Alliance Contracting, Visits to GP Practices during COVID, and current situation around Support for Mental Health Service Users and Carers.

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

Meetings take place at the Waddington Street Centre, 3 Waddington Street, DH1 4BG.

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



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 a milestone 60 shows have been recorded since March 2020.

In the 60th show, broadcast at the end of June, Ricky compiled a selection of discussions with past guests: Take One Leave One Newcastle, North Tyneside Arts Studio, Jo Loughran, Joe's Giants, Elswick Mutual Aid, Steve Pledger & Amer Mirza (available to download soon).

Previous Mentally Sound shows now available to stream or download:

In Episode 59, fellow Mentally Sound founder Victoria Nunn talks with Ricky about her current work with Aspire, and they share memories of late Jules Clare. NHS worker & musician Ian Ó Curnáin talks on lockdown/depression, plays one of his songs: <https://clyp.it/mveemand>

In Episode 58, actress Kirsty Dillon updates listeners since her last appearance, on the future of arts/theatre, and new projects and Lora Coyle talks about cycling & wellbeing, and how she hopes to combine both: <https://clyp.it/3uesduwj>

Episode 57, therapist Amer Mirza responds to tennis star Naomi Osaka opening up on her mental health. Sara Young of Changing Minds With Pick Up A Penny discusses her work, lockdown, and fundraising for therapy centres: <https://clyp.it/hcybdcfi>

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 #LifelInLockdown 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>

Vacancies

Peer Worker roles with TEWV NHS Trust [North East]



Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust

Tees, Esk & Wear Valleys NHS Trust (TEWV) have Peer Worker roles available based at the following locations:

- Durham and Darlington: Lanchester Road Hospital & West Park (covers both): [Follow this link.](#)
- Teesside: Roseberry Park Hospital: [Follow this link.](#)
- York: Foss Park Hospital: [Follow this link.](#)
- Scarborough: Cross Lane Hospital: [Follow this link.](#)

Please note that people need to submit a separate application for each location they would like to be considered for though it's totally fine if the applications are identical.

The adverts will close at 23:59 on the 4th July.

If you're interested in these roles and would like further information there is a webinar on Thursday 1st July at 11am for people who are interested in applying and would like to find out more. You can sign up for the webinar here: <https://events.indeed.com/event/105422/>

You can also contact Mark Allan (07826 894974) for an informal chat.



Kooth is an online **mental wellbeing** community for young people

Here are some of the features young people can access on Kooth:



Magazine

The Kooth magazine shares personal experiences and tips from young people and our Kooth team



Discussion Boards

Young people can start or join a conversation with our friendly Kooth community, with lots of topics to choose from



Chat

Young people can chat with our helpful team about anything that's on their mind



Daily Journal

Young people can view their daily journal to track feelings or emotions and reflect on how they're doing

For ages: **11-25**



Sign up for free at **Kooth.com**

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.



COURSES AND ACTIVITIES — OPENING UP AND 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/> - currently CLOSED

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 keyrings to promote Helpline

Our contact at the [Durham branch of the Samaritans](#) at Sutton Street has asked for help in handing batches of FREE key rings to organisations and businesses who can come into contact with people suffering distress or feelings of suicide.

If you would like a batch of keyrings for your organisation to distribute or for more information please contact Keith Mollon by emailing k23m23@icloud.com or text or call him on 07846969851.

Samaritans freephone 116123 (Confidential listening service 24/7) and [follow this link](#) for other ways to contact them.

Look out for the **Big Talk** during July when The Samaritans hold events and raise awareness of their services.



Men's Wellbeing Group



Every Tuesday 10:30am-11:30am

There is a small entry fee of £1 per person per session

Our support group is an opportunity for men over the age of 18 to mix with others in a safe environment and discuss any matters that may be concerning you. Many different topics and guest speakers.

We will also be having fun and laughter too with team building exercises and games.

Sunderland Mind Wellbeing Hub

Church Street East
Sunderland
SR1 2BB

For any further information or to book your place, please contact Paul on - 0191 5657218 or email - paul.booth@sunderlandmind.co.uk

Forest & Outdoor Activities

Anxious Minds - WinG Outdoor Club - Your Homes Newcastle

FREE Forest and outdoor activities for adults who wish to connect with nature, improve your well being, in peaceful woodland setting. Plus cycling and canoeing activities.



Cost: FREE
Where: Prudhoe - Northumberland
Times: 10am – 4pm
When: Weekdays in July, August, Sept & October

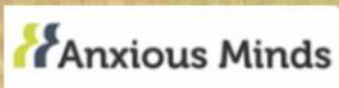
To book contact WinG Outdoor Club:

Telephone: 07506 176 888

Email: nickcoates.wing@gmail.com

Messenger: WinG Outdoor Club

Website: www.wingoutdoorclub.org



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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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:

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This issue edited by Gareth Cooper



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**Chief Executive
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Neil Kelly

Chairperson