



March 2021 Bulletin



Volunteers get us ready to go

Finally spring is here and the hope that we will at last get some sunshine and fresh air. However 'never cast a clout til May is out' and don't start anything in the countryside until it is Covid safe are the two guiding principles MHNE is following to start our **REPLANTING FOR A BETTER FUTURE** project at the end of June.



This project will take small groups of people to our venue in the countryside, Muddy Boots which is located in beautiful scenery next to the Tanfield Railway and just along from the oldest railway bridge of its kind in the world, The Causey Arch.

Our hearty team of volunteers are currently busy renovating facilities, putting a lick of paint here and there and of course new rope swings for the daredevils down in the dene.



Participants choose from a menu of activities and the aim is to simply enjoy and relax as well as discussing the impact Covid has had on all our lives and how we can move forward in a positive way. MHNE will provide refreshments for the day but is unable to provide transport.

Places for small groups are starting to fill up, so please contact me as soon as possible if you would like an informal chat or your organisation would like to book a day marking your email Muddy Boots Day. Contact lyn.boyd@mhne.org.uk or call on 0191 411 1962.

Lyn Boyd, MHNE CEO



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Photos on cover: Dawn, Jack and Jen repainting the training barn, Don busy digging for freedom, and The old oak.



No to Hassockfield! MHNE Supports Campaign raising Concerns over Return to Detention at Medomsley

In January it was suddenly announced that Detention would return to a site in County Durham. A campaign group was formed, No to Hassockfield, to oppose the Home Office & Ministry of Justice plan to turn former Medomsley Detention Centre into an Immigration Removal Centre for women.

MHNE Chairperson Neil Kelly says “our main concern is that mental health and wellbeing issues for those who will be detained there have not been factored into these plans.”

Owain Gardner, core member of the campaign group, says: “The shadow of Medomsley’s past will hang heavily over the women detained there and the workers who oversee them. Its reputation for brutality and abuse of imprisoned young men is widely known.



Now known as **Hassockfield**, it is a place which causes pain across the North East to this day. The original plan was to demolish the buildings on-site, replacing them with housing, including affordable homes, landscaping, investment in local schools, a doctor’s surgery’s and more. They have simply railroaded this plan out of existence at short notice, with no local scrutiny and no local voice was heard, despite the site’s history.”

Owen Temple, a Durham County Councillor also from the group, was stunned to learn that none of the men abused at Medomsley nor any of the workers who had been employed at the Hassockfield Secure Training Centre were consulted. The mental health implications of an Immigration Removal Centre being forced onto County Durham are immense, especially as the investigation into Medomsley Detention Centre, Operation Seabrook, is still taking evidence.

Former MEP Julie Ward said "As a woman who campaigns vigorously to end violence against women, I am appalled at the government’s continued use of detention in respect of vulnerable women, many of whom are already deeply traumatised by their experiences. Women asylum seekers experience violence at every stage of their journey and many suffer PTSD. It is time for the UK to end this cruel unnecessary practice. We can’t thank MHNE enough for their support in this campaign.”

The centre is due to open this Summer, with a view to holding up to 87 women, despite the Westminster Government’s policy being to reduce both the Estate and numbers in detention.

Ultimately, however, the mental health implications for those women who will be held there are too often ignored. Agnes Tonah, a former Asylum Seeker who was held in Yarl’s Wood, spoke to No To Hassockfield saying: “detention destroys a woman. Women become depressed and suicidal. This is personal for me... I don’t want to see this happen to any of my sisters who are looking for safety.”

The campaign has grown from nothing to having local, national and international reach. From Lord Alf Dubs supporting the campaign to an article in the Observer and even attention in Brussels. Find out more here: <https://northeastbylines.co.uk/no-to-hassockfield/> and if you have your own concerns, please consider writing to the local press. The campaign is on Twitter at [@NoToHassockfield](https://twitter.com/NoToHassockfield) and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/358544485247513>

The St Pauls Centre is a community Centre based in Spennymoor, and we focus our work around wellbeing and mental health. To find out more visit: <https://www.stpaulscentrespennymoor.org.uk/>

Lockdown hasn't been easy for any of us - you could say it's been a bit of a 'corona-coaster'. However not everything is in lock down

Friendship is not locked down: The St Pauls Centre, through a number of willing volunteers, has been in weekly contact with our user friends since the end of March 2020, and is still ongoing. All of our friends have appreciated the care shown to them through that weekly phone call. It reminds us that we are loved and remembered, and that each person matters to us.

Creativity is not locked down: when life slowly started moving again, there were still restrictions on what we could and couldn't do. We brought people together into the centre for coffee and cake afternoons or watch a film. Our wellbeing art teacher would work with small groups to produce some wonderful creations from nothing. The Rainbow Singers found new ways of singing and learnt to sign some of our songs. I think we all found that quite moving once we had mastered the 'art of doing it'. Sadly, due to guidelines changing yet again we had to stop these groups.

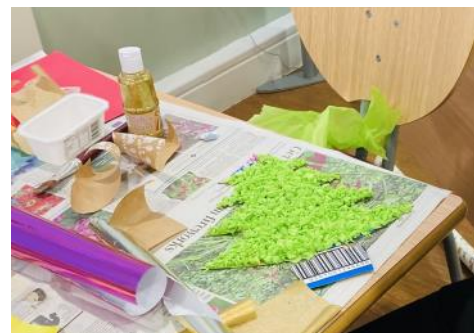


Conversation is not locked down: Under the current guidelines support groups are allowed, and we run two support groups to combat loneliness and mental health. Working in partnership with Wellbeing for Life, the mental health team, our local AAP and Town Council, people come to share in conversation, or some activity around wellbeing. Just to hear people laugh is a tonic in itself.

Our support groups, run by St Pauls Centre volunteers is organised weekly, and it aims to provide a social environment where new friendships can be formed, meet old friends, share games, crafts over afternoon tea. We aim is to help those with mental health problems, and especially, those whose confidence has been knocked due to shielding, who might have become fearful of going out. All of course in a Covid-secure, socially-distanced environment.

The response has been wonderful to witness. We have seen people come as strangers, and have made new friends over the weeks. Our clients have a lovely afternoon. Comments like –'just nice to see another face', 'isn't it lovely to have a conversation with someone'.

People have engaged in 'new experiences' from making Christmas decorations, weaving, to writing poems about their personal lockdown. Laughter is the one thing that struck me from these sessions.



There hasn't been much laughter throughout lockdown, but for a couple of hours on a Tuesday and Thursday we hear the sound of laughter.

Lockdown thoughts from St Pauls Centre Support Groups

compiled from people's thoughts by Maureen Aspey (Chair of Directors St Pauls Centre)

I'm sick!

Sick of Lockdown,
Sick of drinking, sick of the TV, the news, sick of all this doom and gloom.
Sick of staying for hours in my living room
with knitting, crosswords, reading, colouring books.
I'm sick!!

I'm stressed

Stressed, and bored
Stressed and worried about the future
Stressed and anxious
Can't get motivated.
And so I am stressed!!

I am lonely

Lonely and afraid,
Lonely, although I try to keep going
Lonely, and adrift.
Sick, Stressed and Lonely

I am thankful

Thankful for nature, and watching the birds through the window
Thankful for kind words spoken by a friend
Thankful for this time when I can meet others at the support group
Thankful for family
Thankful for phone calls
For texts that say, I Love You
I am Thankful

I am Hopeful

Hopeful
Hopeful for our NHS
Hopeful for the vaccine
Hopeful that we will mix with each other again
Hopeful that we will kiss, hug, laugh
Hopeful that All will be Well
I am hopeful

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. The show was originally set up as a peer support project on community radio supported by MHNE, MHM and Launchpad in 2015. It was re-branded as **Life in Lockdown** due to the COVID situation and now over 45 podcasts have been produced in the year since March 2020.



This month, the show announced that Amer Mirza (see photo below—on the left), friend of the show and qualified psychotherapist-counsellor has joined the podcast team as therapist/advisor.

In the latest show broadcast this month, Episode 45, Amer talks about ‘compassion’ while Ritchie and Val of Dundee-based Walk and Blether discuss podcasting and suicide prevention — and there’s details of the Covid vaccine bus in Newcastle’s west end!

Previous shows now available to stream / download:

In **Episode #43** Local stand-up John Scott talks all things bipolar, streaming and his 'Delusions' show and therapist Amer Mirza talks about bingeing, lifestyle and BAME mental health: <https://clyp.it/ckweyxkv>

In **Episode #44** Annalice Argyle talks of her addiction-recovery journey, and setting up Trac UK (Teesside) helping women & girls in Teesside. And we remember poet and friend of the show, Jules Clare, The Jewelster, who we sadly lost last month, by playing a poem he recited on one of our earliest radio show. <https://clyp.it/runnuvex>

Please contact Ricky Thamman by email—studio@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.

An archive of #LifeInLockdown podcasts can be found on Spotify, Clyp, Apple and Pocket Casts.

In Memory of Jules Clare — “The Jewelster”

Everybody associated with Mentally Sound were saddened to hear the recent passing of our friend Jules Clare, also known by his pen-name ‘the Jewelster’.

Jules was involved at the very beginning of the Mentally Sound Radio show, doing film reviews, cracking jokes, but especially reciting his exquisite poetry!

Our deep condolences go out to his family from MHNE and we will miss his wise words. Freedom, one of the poems he shared with listeners on the show can be found over the page.



Freedom

by Jules Clare

close your eyes
go back in time
imagine it
the wind rustling
through your hair
the sun blazing
deeply on your back
the mountains
rugged, pointed, sharp
the trees
green, vivid, bold
strong, rigid, dependable
the air
clean, fresh, invigorating
the land
lush, true, real
soft yet hard
undulating, everlasting
the streams
bubbling, rippling, meandering
the rocks
protruding, prominent, hidden
nature in all it's glory
imagine time
imagine the moments
the reality
the experience
imagine yourself
a dot, a thing
a moment in time
imagine nothingness
its greatness
its silence
open your eyes
appreciate life



Poem Copyright – Jules Clare
The Jewelster – June 2010

Photo: Jules reading poetry Christmas 2015

Safer Recruitment of Volunteers and Staff June 2021 [Online Training]

Monday 7th June 2021, 10.00-11.30am - Online via Zoom

Community and voluntary organisations need to ensure safe recruitment practices to help make sure their staff and volunteers are suitable to work with children, young people and adults as part of their commitment to keep children safe from harm.



NORTHUMBERLANDCVA
Supporting Communities, Enabling People

Safer recruitment of staff and volunteers should be a continuing process of improvement within your organisation.

Taking place remotely using Zoom, this session will be delivered by Catalyst Stockton on behalf of Northumberland CVA as part of Safer Culture North East. Attendance is free to Northumberland voluntary and community organisations, and to those operating in other areas covered by the partnership.

This session will cover how to recruit safely to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults in the recruitment of staff and volunteers in community and voluntary organisations.

By the end of this workshop you will have gained an understanding of:

- Your organisations' safeguarding responsibilities in recruitment and management
- Key safeguarding issues involving staff
- Key safeguarding issues involving volunteers
- What needs to be included in a robust safeguarding policy and effective procedures

To register, please email enquire@northumberlandcva.org.uk with the name of the training session in the subject line. You can book only one place for yourself. If you have colleagues who wish to attend, they must make their own reservation.

Downloadable resources and a list of other events can be found here:

<https://www.vonne.org.uk/safer-culture-north-east-resources-and-training>

These events are part of Safer Culture North East, a partnership between Catalyst Stockton-on-Tees, Connected Voice, Durham Community Action, Northumberland CVA, and VONNE, funded jointly by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, and The National Lottery Community Fund.

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.



LGBTQI Youth Group



Wednesdays from 5pm-7pm at The Life House,
Grasmere Terrace, Columbia, Washington, NE387LP

Washington Mind's LGBTQI youth group is suitable for young people aged 13-25. We provide a safe space for young members of the LGBTQI+ community to engage with others, form friendships and safely explore who they are.

If you'd like to join us, get in touch by sending us a message on our Instagram @rainbowrenegades or Facebook @RRLGBTQI.

You can also get in touch by email on: ypp@washingtonmind.org.uk



Regional Virtual Event 2021



Supporting a positive future
for prisoners and their families

Tell us what you think about:

- Health care in north east prisons
- The impact of lockdown and Covid restrictions on family ties – including your experience of visits, video calls, other ways to keep in touch and concerns for loved ones in prison
- Support you might need in the community when a loved is serving a prison or community sentence

Health care and prison staff will be at the event.

Date:
Thurs 8 April 2021

Time:
9.30am to 12noon

Online via Zoom

**FREE for anyone
with a loved one in
a north east prison**

Book your place now!

Email training@nepacs.co.uk
or call 0800 012 1539 and you will be sent all the details.

All friends/families who attend will be entered into a FREE PRIZE DRAW to win one of three shopping vouchers.

Charity No 1088051 Company No 04216908

www.nepacs.co.uk



Arnold Clark Community Fund

Arnold Clark

The fund aims to help UK charities and local community groups continue their important work which may be at risk due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Grants can be requested from £100 to £1000. The grants are awarded by a monthly draw.

At the end of each month, 500 applications will be granted. Applications that are unsuccessful one month will be kept in the draw for the following month.

The final deadline is 31st May 2021.

Full details available on the Arnold Clark website: <https://www.arnoldclark.com/community-fund>



An Introduction to Health and Wellbeing

April 7th - 12th May

Wednesdays @ 6pm - 7.45pm, via zoom

This course consists of 6 weekly sessions as developed by the Mindfulness Association, and each session offers a set of strategies to bring an improved sense of wellness in life.

It is open to anyone with eating distress and also those caring for a loved one with ED.

During this challenging time in our lives, it is more important than ever to find ways to support our health and well-being and to develop positive ways to navigate our constantly and increasingly changing and uncertain world.

Please email enquiries@niwe.org.uk to book your place

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:**



“I dodged showers this afternoon to take a photo at the allotment today. It's almost prepared for planting. I will add some compost. The grass will need to be cut in a few weeks at most, it's starting to grow. I should be sowing the first batch of seeds into seed trays in a day or two. I will keep the early seeds somewhere warm for a few weeks before they go into the greenhouse, it's too cold at night in the greenhouse at present.

I have been getting exercise by going for walks in the local area. Most winters I would travel further afield, but I understand it's necessary to be careful. Winters are a quieter time in gardens, the weather is too difficult to do much. It's been snowing here regularly.”

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.

MHNE will publicise the details of future meetings here in our monthly bulletin as they resume.



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/>

Vacancies

Office Manager (Woman) NIWE - Newcastle

Salary £21,000 - £25,000 (dependant on experience). Hours up to 37 per week by agreement.

NIWE is the leading specialist mental health charity in the North East working with those affected by eating distress.

For more information please download an application pack from <http://www.niwe.org.uk/>

Closing date for this post is 12 noon on 7th April 2021

Carers into Work Advisor at Carers Northumberland

Salary: £23,735 per annum. Hours: 37 hours per week

Fixed term until 31 March 2023

Based in Ashington, NE63 8RS.



To download an application pack please go to <https://carersnorthumberland.org.uk/vacancies>

Deadline: 10am on Tuesday 6 April 2021



Do you want to help your community have a say in influencing research?

We are looking for well connected community leaders, based anywhere in the UK, to **host online discussions about healthy environments with members of their community**, who's voices aren't normally heard.



What will you gain?

- The opportunity to watch **new films made with community members**.
- You will **receive training** in facilitating online communication and helping groups have meaningful discussions.
- You will be appropriately supported and **paid for your time** (about 9 hours until end of June 2021).
- You and your community will **gain knowledge** about healthy environments and influence research.



For more details and to apply fill out this form by **18th March**
<https://tinyurl.com/5yf4smjn>

Any questions?
Email: anna@helixcentre.com
Call: 07795 353032

Stay Safe Feel Well

Brand new Aspire programme
based on the
5 ways to wellbeing featuring:

- * Supported activities *
- * Groups *
- * Safe space *
- * Peer support *

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:
SUICIDE PREVENTION FUND
COUNTY DURHAM, TIME TO CHANGE
& DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

**For more information about
our support services
please email:
sisters@aspire-northeast.co.uk**

01

BE ACTIVE



02

CONNECT



03

KEEP
LEARNING



04

TAKE
NOTICE



05

GIVE TO
OTHERS





Think Positive

POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH IN DURHAM

HOLISTIC THERAPIES

Help to balance your Mind, Body and Spirit by accessing a range of treatments from our qualified and professional Holistic Therapists

- Indian Head Massage
- Reiki
- Relaxation/Meditation
- Chakra Balancing

RECOVERY SERVICES

Accessing the Think Positive project also means that you can gain access to all of the recovery services that exist within PACT House Stanley. These include:

- Community Café / Community Meals and Foodbank support
- 7 days a week, support, social interaction and volunteering
- Wifi, computer/printer access and IT support
- Music, Crafts and Art Sessions including drop-in clubs and activities
- Well-being, managing emotions and mental health 1st aid classes
- Routes to setting up your own support / social groups

WHO IS THE SERVICE FOR?

Think Positive is available to anyone aged 18+ living in the Derwentside area who are experiencing emotional or mental health issues and feeling socially isolated.



Think Positive

Tel: 07735 143086

info@thinkpositivedurham.org

PACT House Stanley

Tel: 07720 650533

pacthousestanley@outlook.com



Mental Health & Emotional Support

for adults in County Durham

This is a **great starting point** to help you **access support**

Advice and self-help



NHS

Stressed, anxious or depressed? Or just want to feel happier your NHS is here to help.



Every Mind Matters

Find expert advice and practical tips to help you look after your mental health and wellbeing.



The Recovery College Online

Providing a range of online courses and resources



Mind

Resources from Mind can help find what's right for you and your family.



Rethink Mental Illness

Offer online support and some local groups.



Helplines and Webchats



Shout

Anxious? Worried? Stressed? Get 24/7 help from our team of Crisis Volunteers. Text 85258.



Samaritans

The Samaritans are there to listen



116 123 24 hours a day 365 days a year



SANE

Sane and the SANEline offers one-to-one support for those times you feel you need it most.



07984 967 708



Calm: Campaign against living miserably

Access the helpline to talk and find support.



0800 58 58 58 365 days a year 5pm-Midnight



If you are looking for more specific help

NHS Mental Health

Remember **GPs** are **available to help**.

You are **not alone**, we can get through this **together**.

County Durham
Care Partnership

County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group

Connecting to local support



Wellbeing for life

Helping you find what's around you and how to make the most of it.



0800 876 6887

Call free for expert advice



ManHealth

Offering advice, peer workshops and a place to talk.



01388 320023



Talking Changes

A self-help, counselling and talking therapies service designed to help anyone with common mental health problems.



0191 333 3300



Time to Change Hub

A local social movement aiming to change the way people think and act about mental health.



Durham Locate



Durham County Council

Helping you to find support locally.

Accessing specialist Services



NHS 111

Answer questions about your mental health and find you support locally.



County Durham Together hub

Help when self-isolating/how to volunteer.



03000 260 260



Community Floating Support Teams

Offering services for people with mental health issues who do not have a social worker or care coordinator to access support.



03000 269 071



Crisis Resolution and Intensive Home Treatment Team

Providing specialist treatments and assessments from with a range of professionals 24/7.



03000 200 317

County Durham
Care Partnership

County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys **NHS**
NHS Foundation Trust



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

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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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