



Photo (above right): The Tanfield Railway train cutting through Muddy Boots' land. Due to Covid restrictions the railway has been unable to run, but their great band of volunteers were busy preparing the track and other essential work to get the railway up and running for the North Pole Express trains (sold out) before Christmas.

Mental Health North East looks forward to seeing the train in action again when we restart our activities at Muddy Boots.

Well it's been a strange and difficult year with a new word in the dictionary, "Covid19". Some of us have lost loved ones; many are suffering from the effects of isolation, loneliness, and loss of employment and income which can trigger depression and other mental health related issues. Christmas is thought of as a time of celebration but let's not forget that it can be a source of stress, sadness, and distress, even without this year's unexpected twist.

Yet for all that, we at MHNE have been bowled over by the generosity and kindness of people offering donations, help and assistance.

New partnerships have been formed and new projects started up - a very positive feature amongst the gloom that will allow us to continue with our work into next year. So, a sincere thank you to all who have contributed MHNE in any way.

So, can we wish you all a happy Christmas and hope the coming year brings peace, prosperity, and happiness. And with it, the prospect of a vaccine against the virus meaning more hope for the future.



Neil Kelly (MHNE Chairperson)





Inside this December Issue:

Donations and MHNE / partner updates	3-6
Reports and Surveys	7-8
Regional listings	9-10
Courses and Flyers	11-13
MHNE Contacts	14



After we received this kind donation of £212 from the Hetheringtons, we asked to hear the story behind their little angels!

The Angel from the North

“My Dad (Mr Neil Hetherington) started make Angels, as a hobby, last year. He gave some out as presents and people absolutely loved them. Then, this year, in October he found 15 Angels that we decided we should sell as ‘Covid Angels’: Angels that remind you to look after yourself, especially during the crazy year that 2020 has been.

So we decided to sell them and donate £1 from every Angel to MHNE. We put the 15 we had on Social Media to see if any of our friends would like one and they ALL went within two minutes, and then we kept getting message after message after message seeing if he could make some more.

Two days later our order list had gone up to 93 Angels. It was amazing as we (especially my Dad) did not expect the kindness at all. We have worked as a family to get all of the Angels out to their new owners with myself taking the orders, my mam dispatching them and then my dad making them in the garage.

Two months, later and we have sold 212 Angels, they have travelled all around the world and have reached 5 continents.

As family we are so grateful to be able to donate £212 to MHNE, as we know you do such a great job supporting the people of the North East.

We want to people to look at the Angels, have hope and share love all around the World!

We hope you have an amazing Christmas and wish for a wonderful 2021.”

The Hetherington Family x



**Department
of Health &
Social Care**

Staying mentally well: winter plan 2020 to 2021

The Department of Health and Social Care has launched its plans to support people's wellbeing and mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic over the winter. This simple guide includes community support, how to help the NHS and how to help your own health and wellbeing. [More details here.](#)

Donation from RingGo as their Regional Charity 2020

We were delighted to hear from [Ring Go](#), a cashless parking app company in November who wanted to make a staff donation £250 as part of their regional Christmas Charity giving, through which their staff select a different charity each year for each region.

Alfie, who contacted us from Ring Go told us:

“After researching charities in the North East, fellow colleagues decided Mental Health North East was a more than worthy charity to receive a donation. Especially with subsequent lockdowns affecting people from all walks of life and taking a toll on their mental health.”



We would like to thank Ring Go for choosing us, and wish them all the best for 2021!



Co-op Provides Sponsorship for Special Bulletins

Many thanks to the Co-op for sponsoring MHNE's three festive publications. The MHNE team at this time of year publish specific information designed to help anyone suffering mental distress or in need at this time .

This information is additional to our normal bulletin and a children and young people's newsletter - with content written and co-produced by the children and young people themselves.

It makes this period a busy and costly time of year for our small team and therefore, the grant from the Coop and the donations from others has been a huge help to our finances but also to our morale.



We are also extremely grateful to have received **two local donations** since our last bulletin. We have called to thank Mrs B, Stanley and Mr and Mrs R, Chester le St.

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.

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

Our contact details can be found on the back page.

Replanting for the Future - Showing Promise for Spring 2021



MHNE wishes to thank County Durham Community Foundation and Stanley Action Area Partnership for funding the forthcoming **Replanting for a Better Future** Project. Work has already commenced preparing a menu of activities for participants and to ensure that Muddy Boots, our countryside venue, is a safe environment to allow the project to commence in Spring 2021.

We look forward to working with our partners, Sunderland University, as well as some old friends such as Just for Women and also making some new ones!



County Durham
Community Foundation

The research team from Sunderland University sent the following message of support:

“Support for mental health and wellbeing has never been more crucial than over this last year. Over the past months, Dr Stephen Dunne and myself, Dr Catherine Kenny have worked closely with Lyn Boyd and Neil Kelly to develop a piece of research aimed at supporting the valuable services offered by MHNE. Like you, we have managed to find ways around COVID-19 restrictions to visit Muddy Boots and plan a project that will help us to evaluate the contribution of the scheme to its users. With luck - and the new vaccine of course – we plan to come and meet with you all in the Spring and hopefully contribute to Replanting for a Better Future.

Stephen and I would like to send our thanks and warm thoughts to everyone involved with MHNE. May you all find some light and hope during the coming holiday season, Merry Christmas!”

Future bulletins will carry updates on our Replanting for a Better Future project.

Lockdown Diaries: Keith Philips- Durham Countywide Forum

I attended the TEWV AGM a few days ago. The AGM was held via the internet and lasted an hour or so. There is a detailed AGM report [available on the TEWV website](#). The written report covers many different areas of TEWV. It is too long and detailed to sum up in a few sentences, so I have picked out some of the details I found of interest.

The Corona virus has had an effect on most of the NHS, and TEWV is included. There is a mini spending review planned for the coming year because of the virus. However the review might not be as difficult as might be expected (hopefully). There is some new funding promised for TEWV. The Crisis service in Co Durham should get more funding. Ambulance staff should be notified if there is a Mental Health element to a call out. Like many areas around the UK, TEWV have staff shortages, and staff recruitment difficulties.

The allotment is quiet now, the soil has been too wet for weeding, The main jobs have been "tidying up" and watering the plants in my greenhouse. If there is a dry spell of weather there are some jobs which could be done, as with any allotment there is always something to do.

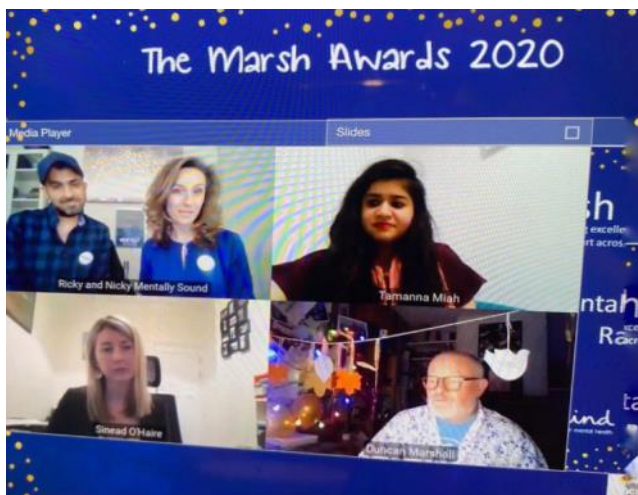


Keith is Chair of Durham County Wide Mental Health Service Users and Carers Forum (aka the **Countywide Forum** or CWF). They discuss experiences of help and treatment in the area, exploring the issues with guest speakers and practitioners. Face to face meetings are on hold for the present but to be

Mentally Sound: Life in Lockdown passes 30-episode mark and the hosts revisit the Mind Marsh Awards / Peerfest!

Download the podcast or hear the show on Spice FM **Tuesdays at 1pm**

Mentally Sound: Life in Lockdown is an award winning radio show, recorded as a podcast on a weekly basis, and then broadcast on Spice FM each Tuesday from 11am until noon. The show was originally set up as a peer support project supported by MHNE, MHM and Launchpad.



This 10th December was an exciting day for Mentally Sound, as hosts Ricky & Nicky gave a presentation to the live and online ceremony of the Mind Marsh Awards 2020 (also known as **PeerFest**) as the show was among the winners back in 2015!

The annual awards are sponsored by Mind and the Marsh Christian Charity, and they champion the work of Mental Health peer support groups in England and Wales. For more information see:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/marsh-awards/>

In the latest show broadcast this month, episode 32, Ricky & Nicky talk to Ben, who got in touch to talk about his mental health journey, which includes wellbeing at work, peer support and post natal depression.

The latest podcasts for download include Episode 30 in which is discussed reaching the 30 episode milestone, and also 'managing the here & now' including a custom '12-step programme'! Download it here: <https://clyp.it/pnvlkt3t>

And in Episode 29 therapist Nicky talks about her recent 'retreat', and what the benefits of 'reset' can do for our mental & physical wellbeing in these times. Link here: <https://clyp.it/dlgmkcsg>

Please contact Ricky Thamman by email—studio@spicefm.co.uk if you would like to get in touch with the show or offer to be a guest on a future show. Find them on Twitter [@mentallysound](https://twitter.com/mentallysound) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/mentallysound) for the very latest show information.

Operation Payback — Recovered Cash Pumped into Communities



violence
reduction
unit

A £350,000 pot of money recovered from criminals in the North East is going back where it belongs – into the grassroots of local communities.

The new funding scheme – called Operation Payback – launched by Northumbria Police and Crime Commissioner is appealing to local projects and community groups to apply to receive a cash boost to help make a difference to local lives. Funding is available for groups that support vulnerable people or projects that provide diversionary activities to help tackle anti-social behaviour. [More info here.](#)



Get it off your chest

Men's mental health 10 years on



New Report by Mind: Men's mental health under pressure as suicidal thoughts double in ten years

A new report published mid-December 2020 reveals new research into men's mental health, showing that, while some progress has been made, men feel worried or low more regularly than ten years ago and are twice as likely to feel suicidal.

'Get It Off Your Chest: Men's mental health 10 years on' - commissioned by Mind in partnership with the English Football League (EFL), compares 2019 polling data from YouGov with the survey from 2009 to understand how the challenges facing men's mental health have changed.

The results suggest that while men generally feel more able to seek help and open up about mental health, those with worries are still relying on coping mechanisms such as drinking alcohol alone and taking recreational drugs.

It also suggests that more effort should be made to provide alternatives to medication for men. While men are now more willing to seek help, they are not always receiving a range of treatment options that suit them. When asked the main factor that would make it easier to seek support, men would be more likely to seek support if it was available online, if they were guaranteed anonymity, or if help was available at more convenient times of day.

The **three main recommendations** from the report to the Government, NHS and employers are:

- The NHS should co-produce mental health services with communities, including men, to make sure that effective support is available locally and meets men's needs.
- As part of the NHS Long Term Plan, NHS England has pledged that by 2023/24, 900,000 more people will have access to 'social prescribing' – a golden opportunity for men to access alternatives to traditional clinical services which support mental health, such as physical exercise, walking groups, gardening groups, or learning activities on prescription.
- Men should continue to be a key target audience for suicide prevention action and the Government should set both national and local targets for suicide reduction.

The full report can be found here: www.mind.org.uk/media/6771/get-it-off-your-chest_a4_final.pdf

Have your say on Mental Health service plans in Sunderland

Sunderland NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) are working to improve mental health services across the city.



Mental health and wellbeing is a key priority within the draft **Sunderland Healthy City Plan** and new national funding is due to be made available to transform how community mental health services are delivered. This is a rare opportunity to significantly redesign models of care for adults and older people to ensure their needs are met.

They are asking us all to [complete this survey](#) which closes on **January 22nd**.

Community Mental Health Survey 2020 Results

The Care Quality Commission last month published the results of their 2020 community mental health survey which includes feedback received during September-November 2019.



The report shows that people are consistently reporting poor experiences of NHS community mental health services, with few positive results. For example, poor experiences were reported for crisis care, accessing care, and involvement. The CQC have also found disparity in experiences of different groups of people, especially among respondents with different diagnoses.

Read more about the overall findings here.

<https://www.cqc.org.uk/publications/surveys/community-mental-health-survey-2020>

Detailed results of the survey from the two North East regional providers can be found here:

CNTW - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RX4/survey/6>

TEWV - <https://www.cqc.org.uk/provider/RX3/survey/6>

MAD COVID Launch their COVID-19 Recommendations for Mental Health Services

Mad COVID is a shared space for grassroots mental health survivor / service user projects that started during the COVID19 pandemic.

They provide a series of broad recommendations for mental health services during the COVID-19 pandemic. They focus specifically on services for people with pre-existing mental health conditions who have moderate, severe or long-term needs.

Read their [full recommendations here](#).

Mad COVID also have a podcast called Mad Conversations which is well worth a listen:

<https://madcovid.wordpress.com/mad-conversations/>



Follow MHNE on Social Media?

For regular updates throughout the month about local, regional and national news on the subject of mental health.

Twitter: [@mhnetweets](#) and [@mhne_yp](#)

Facebook group :

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/MentalHealthNE/>



Mental Health NE

@MHNEtweets

Working together for better mental health and wellbeing in the North of England.

📍 North East England 🌐 mhne.org.uk 📅 Joined August 2010

7,546 Following 7,512 Followers



Bridge Northumberland Can Help!

Clair Parker has been in touch from Bridge Northumberland, where she is Engagement and Recruitment Officer, to tell us that Bridge continues to provide free and voluntary support to people across Northumberland who may be long term/ recently unemployed or redundant and experiencing barriers preventing them moving forwards.

People can expect connection with friendly understanding professionals who have the best interests of the individuals at the centre of everything they do. A Bridge Worker provides specialised one to one support-helping people to grow in confidence, connecting with professional friends and peers as well as opportunities to volunteer and make positive supported steps towards training, education and employment.

Centred around each individuals' needs, the personalised support can include;

- Financial MOT including benefits & debt advice
- Mental health counselling
- Social and Digital inclusion
- Skills building, training and education
- Confidence coaching
- Supported bespoke volunteering opportunities
- Careers guidance and job search support



Bridge has adopted a holistic approach to helping people to address their mental well-being; support is available in practical ways to set goals and gain a sense of purpose, as well as the more formal counselling available.

Anyone is welcome to call or text BRIDGE to 07393796522 for a friendly chat, with information and referral for support. Email clair.parker@northumberlandnva.org.uk who will be happy to help.

Visit <https://bridgenorthumberland.org.uk/success-stories/> for more information and see their flyer on the following page.

Involvement Work Coordinator [Gateshead and SouthTyneside]

Salary: £25,000 (Full time) Closing date: 12 noon on 8th January 2021.



Your Voice Counts are looking for someone to develop, coordinate and to ensure delivery of the work of their Involvement Team. Building on current Involvement and self-advocacy offer; developing a robust peer network and online/community offer for people with learning disabilities and Autistic People across the area. You will help gather views of people with learning disabilities and autistic people to ensure their voices are heard, needs are represented in the support networks and activities developed and ensure views are considered by professionals, service providers & decision makers.

You can find more information about the role on the [Your Voice Counts jobs page](#).

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to jobs@yvc.org.uk

For more information about this role, please call Lindsay Henderson on 0191 478 6472.

Are you looking for free support into work or training?



Bridge Northumberland offers one to one support to get your life back on track.

Our voluntary programme will give you a dedicated Bridge worker who'll work with you to improve your confidence, develop your skills and move towards employment or training.

We can help with any barriers you face such as money worries, counselling for mental health, IT skills training as well as careers advice and job searches.

Our support is free for anyone:

- Age 16-65 years
- Not in education, employment or training
- Living in Northumberland

Find out more by getting in touch:

- Text 'BRIDGE' to 07393 796 522 for a callback
- Email bridgereferral@northumberlandcva.org.uk
- Refer yourself via our website

bridgenorthumberland.org.uk



BridgeNland



@BridgeNland



COURSES AND ACTIVITIES—MOSTLY 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](#)

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/>

PeerTalk[®]

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

EVERY MONDAY 7.00^{pm} – 8.30^{pm}
Bensham Grove, Community Centre,
Sidney Grove, Bensham, Gateshead NE8 2XD.

EVERY WEDNESDAY 7.00^{pm} – 8.30^{pm}
The Big Local, 158 Whitley Road, Whitley Bay, NE26 2LY.

Find out more at:

- 📞 07719 562 617
- 🌐 peertalk.org.uk
- 📧 @peer_talk
- 📍 @peertalk1
- ✉ enquiries@peertalk.org.uk
- 📄 peertalkcharity

TYNE & WEAR

COMMUNITY FUND

The PeerTalk Charitable Foundation, registered charity no.1169830.



Online Training Courses



**FREE for anyone living or working in County Durham
January to March 2021**

Wellbeing for Life - Virtual What's On - for groups starting December and January. All activities can be booked at <https://www.wellbeingforlife.net/whats-on/>

Wellbeing for Life Training Calendar for January – March 2021 Due to Social Distancing Guidelines we are not yet back to training in person, currently all of our training is being delivered via MS Teams and can be booked at <https://www.wellbeingforlife.net/training-courses/>

We are excited to offer our training programme on a virtual platform; and have chosen courses to deliver this way that will support individuals and those who work with others, to raise their awareness in subjects that will improve their mental and physical health in these uncertain times.

- Healthy Lives: Food for Thought
- An Insight into the Menopause
- Physical Activity: Basics to Getting Started
- Basic Diabetes Awareness
- Building Personal Resilience to Change
- Basic Mental Health Awareness
- Suicide Awareness Workshop
- Communication Skills and Motivational Interviewing
- Mental Health at Work



These training and group activities are fully subsidised (i.e. FREE) for anyone living or working in County Durham.



Our Helpline will be open **Mon to Fri, 9am - 6pm during the festive season, including Bank Holidays**

If you're caring for someone, call us on **0808 808 7777**



Support for parents/carers who are caring for a child/young person (0-25 years) with emotional or mental health difficulties



Support groups



Digital and 1:1 support



Involvement opportunities



Training

For more information contact the team:



07377 213952



support@rollercoasterfs.co.uk

Find us on social media:



@rollercoasterparentsupport



@rollercoasterPS



NHS
Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys
NHS Foundation Trust

NHS
County Durham
Clinical Commissioning Group

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