

Valued Voices



Hello and welcome to our Valued Voices Newsletter

The County Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance (DMWA) went live last year in April 2022. For those of you who haven't heard of us we are a partnership of organisations who provide mental health and wellbeing support across County Durham.

www.durhammentalwellbeingalliance.org

We want to make sure that people with mental health needs have easy access to good quality support services which help people to recover and get back on track

Our partners include: Waddington Street Centre, St Margaret's Centre, Home Group, Richmond Fellowship, Creative Support, If U Care Share, Mental Health Matters and Durham County Council. We also have subcontractors, they are: Aspire, Cruse, Relate, Hub of Wishes, Stamp it Out, Pact House, Man Health and Welfare Rights.

A very important aspect of the DMWA is that we want to be led by the voices and views of the people who use our services - that's you!

There are lots of ways you can get involved and hopefully this newsletter will inspire you and give you some ideas. Every contribution is valuable and important - If you would like your art work, poetry, ideas, stories to be shared in this newsletter please get in touch with Ali Lee at aalee@waddingtonstreetcentre.co.uk

Newsletter Highlights

INTRODUCTION

THE COUNTY WIDE FORUM

CREATIVE CORNER

SPOTLIGHT ON STIGMA

USER STORIES

ALLIANCE LAUNCH

MENTAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION - ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

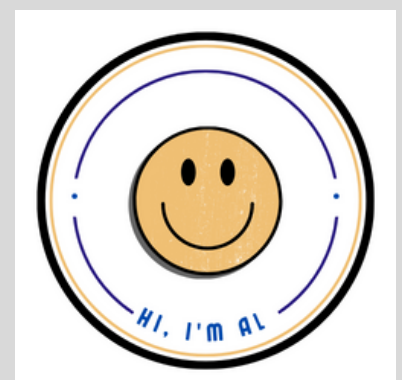




PHOTO OF
MEMBERS OF THE CWF

The County Wide Forum

KEITH PHILLIPS CWF CHAIR

County Durham and Darlington Mental Health Forum (or CWF) meetings are a place where ideas can be shared and discussed. The CWF promotes and supports Mental Health issues and wellbeing in Co Durham and Darlington.

In the last few months, the CWF has invited a number of speakers to meetings. The speakers give good advice and information to the meeting, which can be passed on to the networks of the people who go to the meetings. There is a mailing list for people who are interested, but who may not go to the CWF meetings regularly.

The group has regular briefings from Ali Lee about what is happening at the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance. The group had training on Co-production too.

It is a time of change in Co Durham for Mental Health Services.

Members of the CWF also delivered a presentation on Co-production at the DMWA launch in June 2022.

"Hello, my name is Diane I have been attending the countywide forum meetings for the past three months now I was introduced by my friend Keith Phillips, the chair of the group I'm really enjoying myself getting out and meeting the lovely and helpful people involved. We have guest organisations speaking at the group each month from such as the Welfare Rights. You get to learn a lot and then can spread the word to others. I was diagnosed with anxiety and depression. Many years ago. The doctor suggested gardening which I found very Helpful I share the pictures of my garden which I have won two competitions in the past I would recommend joining the group they do a lot for mental health and I hope to be a more active member in the future happy one year anniversary to the alliance. "

Here is a brief overview of the presentations in previous few months.

September 2022 CWF meeting.

Stamp it Out spoke at the meeting. Stamp it Out are a hub based in the Co Durham area. The group challenges stigma and discrimination especially in relation to Mental Health.

November CWF meeting.

Healthwatch spoke at the meeting. Healthwatch services include signposting and information for services available in health. The signposting services could include the best place to make a complaint.

Topics at Healthwatch for 2023 are:

- GP Surgeries
- Care Home Access
- Hospital Discharge
- Hospital waiting times.

There is a "Have your say" area on the website www.healthwatchcountydurham.co.uk

January 2023 CWF meeting.

Julie Cane, from the Durham Wellbeing Alliance, spoke at the meeting.

Julie spoke about the services transformation projects in Co Durham. In Chester-le-Street one of the aims is helping people to find and access available services.

February 2023 CWF meeting.

There was a question and answer session with Welfare Rights.

March 2023 CWF meeting.

There is a new post for a lead role in Lived Experience in Co Durham. One of the topics discussed at the meeting was about how people can be involved and have a say.

May 2023 CWF meeting.

Someone from the PALS team at TEWV is booked to speak at the meeting





PAINTING BY BK - WADDINGTON STREET CENTRE

The Creative Corner

ORIGINAL ART WORKED SHARED BY DMWA SERVICE USERS

Did you know that being creative is very good for your mental health? It's not about producing a masterpiece - which can of course put unnecessary pressure on us. As you can see from the wonderful examples there is a style for everyone. Most importantly it's about how the process can help you to stay well, here's some examples and quotes from our artists.

"Just give it a go, you'll be surprised at how relaxing it is"

"when I'm messing about with paint and colours, nothing else matters - I'm free"

- Making art work can be a distraction from daily worries.
- Taking photographs outdoors is good for us because we are also walking and being out in nature.
- Using our anger and other negative emotions to make an art work can help us to turn something bad into a positive - pictures do not have to be pretty.
- If you attend an art group you can make friends who have similar interests and share tips and ideas.
- Art or other creative processes require us to concentrate. When we do this it helps us to switch off from other worries. Research has even shown that it can help to lower blood pressure and cortisol levels (stress hormones)

GALLERY



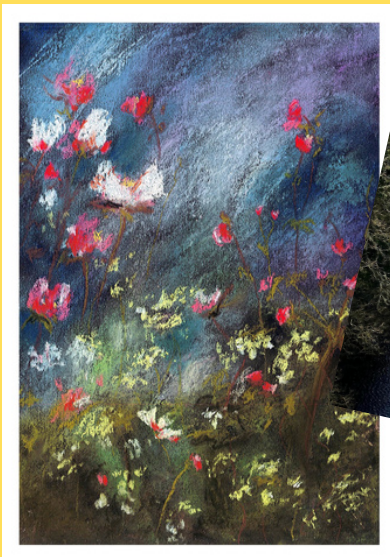


PAINTING BY KATE - COUNTY WIDE FORUM

The Creative Corner

GALLERY

ORIGINAL ART WORKED SHARED BY DMWA SERVICE USERS





PAINTING BY JOHN BAILEY -
WADDINGTON STREET CENTRE



Interview with an Artist - John Bailey

WHAT DO YOU GET OUT OF MAKING ART WORK?

WHEN I'M REALLY DOWN, DOING ART AND WORKING WITH COLOURS LIFTS MY MOOD. THE PROCESS OF MAKING ART GIVES ME A HEALTHIER MIND - IT'S THE BEST COPING TOOL. THE WHOLE PROCESS IS A VALUABLE COPING TOOL AND HAS CHANGED MY LIFE. IT GIVES ME CONFIDENCE IN OTHER LIFE SKILLS AND IS A SPRING BOARD FOR MY MOOD.

WHAT OR WHO INSPIRES YOU TO MAKE ART WORK?

COMING TO THE CENTRE AND LOOKING AT MORE ART AND ARTISTS. WE LOOKED AT ERIC TUCKER AND BETHAN LAKER ON TUESDAYS AND THIS HAS LED ME ON TO A NEW AREA OF INSPIRATION- REALISM AND INDUSTRIAL ART. ALSO - **EDWARD HOPPER, FRANCIS BACON AND EGON SCHIELE** -THEY WERE ORIGINAL AND THE FIRST TO DO WHAT THEY DO. A BREAK AWAY FROM THE NORM AT THE TIME. SEEING THE START OF AN ART MOVEMENT IS SOMETHING I FIND FASCINATING TOO.

SUM UP THE IMPORTANCE OF ART IN NO MORE THAN 5 WORDS

HEALTHY-MIND
ENJOYMENT
FULFILMENT
PURPOSE
LOVE

WHO WOULD YOU MOST LIKE TO OWN A PIECE OF ART BY?

VAN GOGH - POTATO EATERS





SIO LOGO

Spotlight on Stigma - Stamp it Out

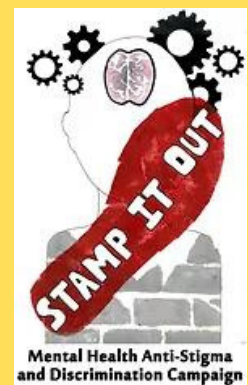
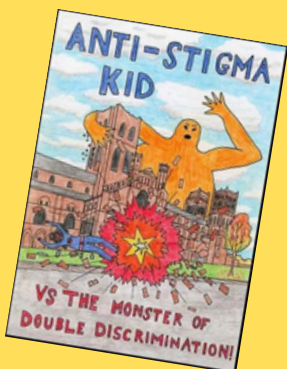
Stamp It Out became a sub-contractor for the Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance the 10th of October 2022.

Stamp It Out hosts the SIO Partnership Hub and anyone who is interested can sign up to become an Anti-Stigma Ambassador (A-S A) or member.

A-S A's can be involved in lots of opportunities of choice including training, events and creating new resources. Here is an example below from an A-S A for Mental Health Awareness Week (last year), explaining about how their experience of Anxiety affects them. They wanted to get across that they are a person in their own right not the condition/disorder they have been diagnosed with! This artwork is used as a resource to break down barriers around mental health stigma and discrimination that people experience.

Mental Health Awareness Week's theme this year is 'Anxiety' and is on from the week beginning the 15th of May. Invites will be coming out for an activity at the Waddington Street Centre on the 20th soon. If you would like to get involved with SIO contact Karen for more information on stampitoutdurham@gmail.com or speak to your service's staff members for them to get in touch.

Karen would be happy to visit for a chat and have a discussion on the opportunities ☺.





ANDREW B

Service User Superheroes

Hello, my name is Andrew and I am 31 years old. I have lived in Home Group supported accommodation for 4 years now and have been attending the football session at Waddington Street Centre for just over 7 years. Football is one of the things I enjoy and the session allows me to keep connected with people. It was through attending football that I was put in touch with Home Group staff and their accommodation provision.

In my early years I spent a lot of time in foster care and moved around from place to place; having this stability and support now means I don't struggle as much as I used to. Generally, I find it hard to ask for help but I do like to give it if I possibly can. Recently I did a sponsored 15 mile walk for Home Group and Waddington Street and managed to raise £500. This was to say thank you to the 2 organisations and to those who have supported me in the past that I am now no longer in contact with.

I am now, I feel, in a better place but I do still struggle and I know I always will - so the help is requiredand appreciated.

Andrew, Home Group Customer and Waddy Member



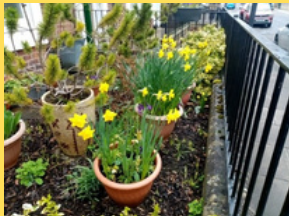


WADDY HELPERS

Tell us how you get involved? - Waddy Helpers

At Waddington Street Centre we have roles for our members who'd like to help out a bit more and give something back to their community. We call ourselves Waddy Helpers. There are many types of helping roles. It's good to help out when you feel well enough but you also learn a lot of skills and develop better confidence.

Here are some pictures of our beautiful (but tiny) garden. It's looked after by Waddy Helpers.



From which ever angle you look at daffodils you can't help but feel cheered up!

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

William Wordsworth 1770-1850



Hi, my name is Robin and I have attended Waddington Street Centre for over 4 years after the Chester le Street MH Team made a referral for me.

I know that I have found a new life for myself and the centre and my new friends here are a huge part of this. I feel that I have been supported by the staff and been able to come on leaps and bounds having become in early 2020 a 'Waddy Helper' in the café and now also helping with the Men's Cree.

I was in a dark place before coming to Waddy and it is great now to be able to welcome and help new people who are coming to the centre to settle in.

I am enjoying my time at Waddy.

Robin, Waddy Member and Helper





ST MARGARET'S CENTRE

My Story – Share your story with others

Claire was referred to St Margaret's Centre in 2019, and since then has been involved in a variety of activities at the centre such as arts and crafts, gardening, and self-management courses.

"It's been 3 years since I started attending the centre, and I've gained so much confidence and started to build on my self-belief and self-love.

The confidence that I have gained helped me escape an abusive and volatile relationship, and I've never been so happy. I've made friendships for life which I never had before. I feel at home when I'm there in our own little protective bubble where you don't get judged or feel anxious about people knowing about my mental health issues or my situation.

It's like another family, always someone to talk to whether that's a member of staff or other attendees. I feel so warm, comfortable and accepted when I'm there. The staff are warm, kind, caring, and always there to help. I enjoy the social days where you can do whatever activity you want or just have a cuppa and chat, it doesn't really matter. Everyone is there for each other. I've learned so much, not just different arts and crafts, but about myself, life, and society. Andrea has been a great help with benefits, housing etc. for everyone, and even helped me with my 1st ever trip to my local food bank.

St Margaret's has given me confidence and self-worth. It saved me, I really couldn't cope or manage without this. I'm forever grateful to all the staff for keeping the centre open. I'm with good friends/family, my own little protective bubble.

"Thank goodness for St Margaret's Centre and its staff!"





LOGO DESIGNED BY SERVICE USERS AT ST MARGARET'S CENTRE



How Users have helped us to develop the DMWA

DMWA

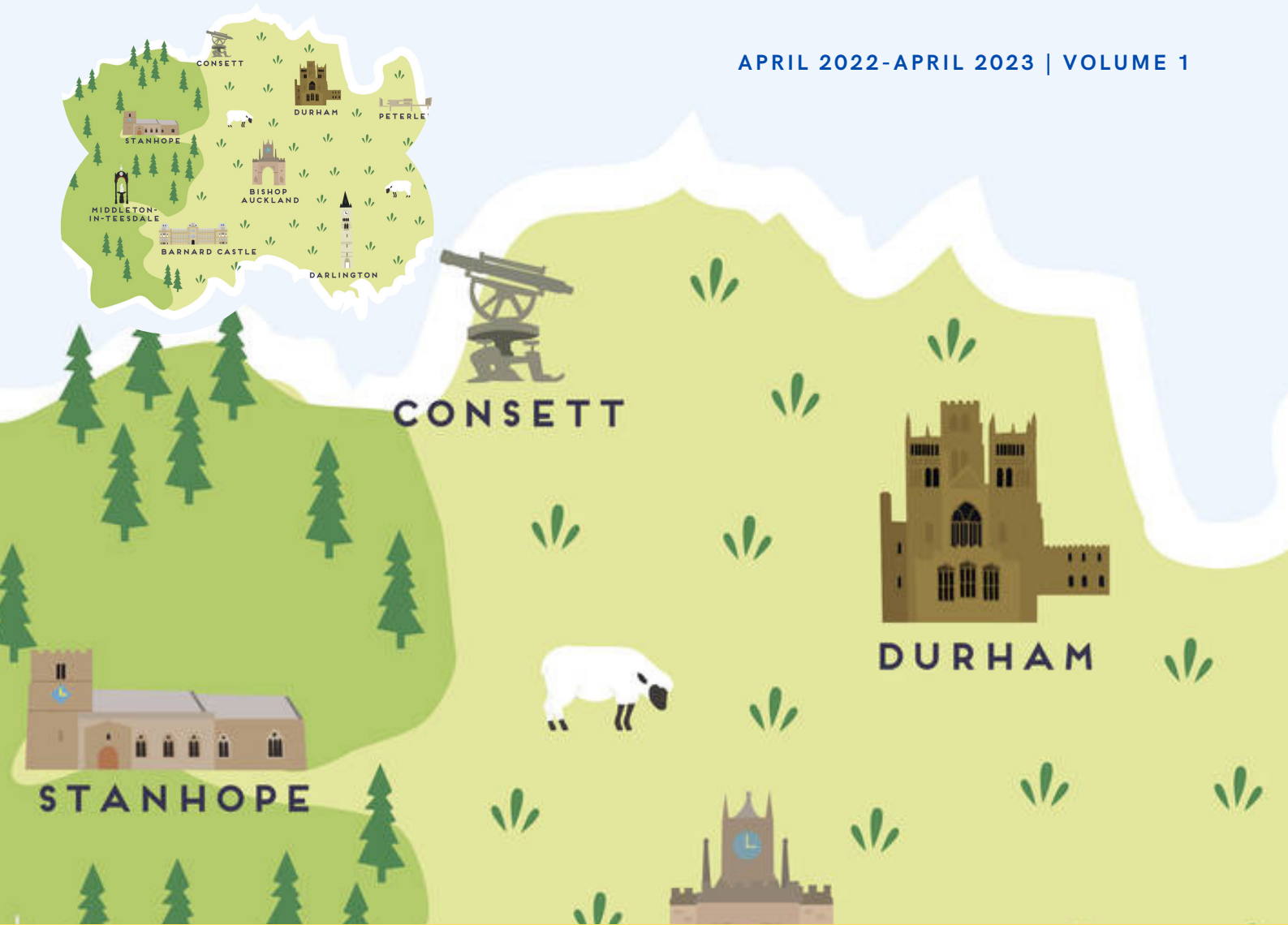
At the start of the Alliance journey our service users helped us by coming up with our name -Durham Mental Wellbeing Alliance and also designing our beautiful logo. We have some wonderful artists with great ideas so it's a great honour to have their help - Thank you.

Competition time - What shall we call this Newsletter? Do you like Valued Voices or have you got a better idea? Send your thoughts to:
alee@waddingtoncentre.co.uk

Launch Event

- Last June we had an Alliance launch event at the Raddison hotel in Durham. Over 100 people attended and it was a great day where all of the services involved promoted the important work that they do.
- There were lots of presentations through the day and one of the best ones was about Engagement and Co-production. This was delivered by people with lived experience and focused on why it's important for people in services to have a voice and how this can help services to improve. It was very brave of our speakers to do this in front of so many people but they did really well.
- Thanks to everyone who was involved.





Would you like to make a difference to community mental wellbeing?

Community Mental Health Transformation is a part of the NHS long term plan to focus on early intervention, support people's wider needs and look not simply at their diagnosis, but what impacts them as a person (i.e., housing, employment, education, etc).

By working closely in partnership with charity organisations, local authorities, and social care we can provide joined-up support to people who struggle with their mental wellbeing. There is a great opportunity for those with lived experience to be at the heart of this work and contribute to shaping it at each stage.

The roll out in County Durham has already started. We are working in the community, for the community, to help improve people's lives.

If you would like to know more, or become involved, please contact:
kalina.bellis@pcp.uk.net





Acts Of Kindness

This verse holds much significance, yet slightly overdue,
For some time now I've been amazed by every one of you.
Especially in murky times where all is so surreal,
Where scars within humanity miraculously heal.
An era where we must accept our frightful world of change,
We never could have wondered - as bizarre as very strange.
But headway is still possible and answers we must seek,
With hope and generosity, and courage week-to-week.
Caring hearts and souls ring true in family and friends,
Regardless of our issues, we must strive to make amends.
There's challenges appearing yet we'll overcome the fight,
Your spirits are remarkable, your efforts bold and bright.
Credited, this journey is a tough one to believe,
But if we pull together we can certainly achieve.
All are now adapting when engaging in our tasks,
Essential journeys only too whilst kitted in our masks.
We should embrace the simple fact we've knuckled down and fought,
Mindful of each other, warmly offering support.
Although these days are difficult, we should feel reassured,
Weathering this virus during all we have endured.
My gratitude to everyone who've eased my trying mission,
Supportive texts and phone calls checking in on my condition.
And that's the point I'm making - all have pulled together well,
Bless you all eternally throughout this crazy spell.
Remember that collectively we'll reach the goals we're chasing,
Acts of kindness helps us with the trials that we are facing.

Chris Short 2022

