

COUNTY DURHAM COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Autumn 2023 Newsletter

Welcome



Work is really gathering pace to implement the Community Mental Health Transformation programme across County Durham. Our aim is to create a more integrated and collaborative approach to how people struggling with their mental wellbeing receive care and support in their local communities. You can read more about our progress so far in this update.

- **Jo Murray, programme lead.**

Working collaboratively and locally

In our bid to work have a more integrated and collaborative approach we've been working at a local level to look at how health and social care staff can work closer and how we can, together, develop a new system-wide approach to supporting people who are struggling with their mental wellbeing.

It's a significant shift in traditional approaches to working with multiple agencies working together to ensure people with mental health difficulties are given the support they need, when they need it and in a way that works for them.

The programme is focusing on six specific areas, Chester-le-Street, East Durham, Central Durham, Sedgefield, Derwentside and Durham Dales.

Steering groups have been established in all areas, with various workshops and events having been held to establish approaches in each area. The lived experience team have been working incredibly hard across local systems to embed and increase the voice of lived experience in local steering groups and this has been really well received.

We've held roadshows in Chester-le-Street, Seaham and Peterlee, which were attended by NHS, social care staff and representatives from the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

The events gave people an opportunity to learn more about the exciting changes we are planning, and how they might use the new approach to help those around them.



All areas are holding regular huddles, which bring various agencies together to discuss cases and how people can best be supported. This has supported a much more integrated approach to how services work together and has also helped organisations to have a much deeper understanding of the support that one another can offer.

Some areas are looking at sites to establish physical hubs, which will provide a shared space for agencies to physically work together, as well as providing a central location for local people to access a wide variety of support. There's also discussion around a mobile hub to support people in more rural communities. Further updates will be provided in the coming weeks.

Peer support scheme sees huge increase in demand for its service

The Durham Police and Crime Commissioner Community Peer Mentor scheme has gone from strength-to-strength following investment from the Durham Community Mental Health Transformation Programme, with a huge demand for its service.

The Community Mental Health Transformation programme funded a full-time substance and alcohol misuse peer mentor coordinator to support and manage 20 substance misuse peer mentors across County Durham and Darlington.

The peer mentors who have their own personal experience of substance and alcohol misuse, support people to access recovery focused services and promote greater continuity of care, helping empower people in their day-to-day lives and aid recovery.

Since the start of the programme in early 2022 the scheme has seen a 70% increase in referrals from people affected by mental health conditions and a 173% increase from those misusing alcohol or substances. The huge increase in demand highlights the overwhelming success of the scheme and a long-term need for this kind of support in the local community.

We are now looking at how we can continue to support the scheme going forward.



Positive outcomes following investment in support for people with relational and emotional difficulties

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The training has allowed mental health practitioners to work with people whose life experiences have led to difficulties with managing emotions, relationships and impulsivity, to really understand their difficulties and how these might relate to their past experiences.

The increased contact and input has led to a positive reduction in the number of people from Durham with complex emotional needs admitted to hospital. Figures have reduced from 30 to two, with a significant reduction in length of stay too.

Dr Beverley Fairclough, Consultant Psychiatrist at Durham East Community Mental Health Team, TEWV explains:



The SCM practitioners can help provide new ways of working with patients, providing different options for treatment, rather than a focus on just one approach or medication alone. It has really helped transform how we work as a team and helped build confidence too.



TEWV service user, Matty, who has benefitted from the SCM approach adds:



The biggest change is focus on self-care, rather than being told what to do. I've now got choices and ownership over my journey and that's helping make a real difference.



Following the success so far plans are in place to widen the training to colleagues in the community, voluntary and social enterprise sector.

Care Navigators pave the way for people to access services

Our Care Navigators are playing a key role in Community Mental Health Transformation, supporting people who are struggling with poor mental health, to access services and support that can aid their wellbeing.

The below case study highlights how the essential support of a Care Navigator can help people take steps towards improving their mental health. We've changed the client's name to protect their anonymity and will refer to them as Jack in this case study.

Jack's story

Following a head injury several years ago Jack struggles with his concentration and memory and this makes solving complex problems extremely difficult.

Due to rising costs of living Jack had got behind in his mortgage payments and was receiving reminders from his bank. This made Jack increasingly anxious about losing his home and he was struggling to resolve the issue on his own.

One of our Community Navigators stepped in and supported Jack to address his problem. The Navigator contacted Community Money Advice to arrange an appointment with a Debt Advisor and helped Jack to attend the appointment. They also helped him with paperwork and liaised with the Department for Work and Pensions, mortgage lender and other creditors on his behalf to take the stress away from him.

Together with the Debt Advisor our Community Navigator also helped Jack to access a benefit he was entitled to, reduce his monthly debt repayments and to develop a monthly budget plan to cover his outgoings. The support to get on top of his debt helped Jack to feel more secure and had a positive impact on his mental health.



"I felt well supported and would have been lost without the help I received. I know if I hadn't got the support I had my mental health would have really deteriorated."

Age UK and TEWV partnership supports older people to live well across County Durham



A partnership between Age UK County Durham and Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) has led to over 400 people aged 50+ being supported with their mental wellbeing across County Durham.

The new community-based service came about following evidence after the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted a need for increased support for older people's mental wellbeing in the county.

The service addresses a wide range of issues that can lead to poor mental and physical wellbeing, from anxiety and depression to past trauma, bereavement and domestic violence.

The aim being to offer early intervention and support people to maintain their wellbeing and independence, reducing the need for referral to secondary services. Both services and individuals can refer into the Older Persons Mental Health service, which offers wellbeing advice and support, one-to-one counselling and wider therapist support.

Wellbeing workers, an occupational therapist, a physiotherapist and psychotherapists work together to address the whole person's needs, looking at what's impacting their wellbeing and what measures can be put in place to help improve it.

The occupational therapist support's with adaptive equipment to help people engage in daily living activities, as well as helping people to engage in wider community activities that can support their wellbeing and independence. The team's physiotherapist can also help people to improve their physical wellbeing by supporting them with movement, exercise, education and advice.

Psychotherapists support people with their emotional wellbeing addressing and supporting them with social and mental health issues and the wellbeing workers support people on a daily or weekly basis to manage their mental health whilst waiting for further support or through the discharge process.

Since the introduction of the service over 45 vulnerable people have been identified and engaged in services, who otherwise would have fallen through the net. Of the 400 people seen by the service only 14% required additional support from secondary mental health services, ensuring that people get the support they need before their mental health requires further significant intervention.

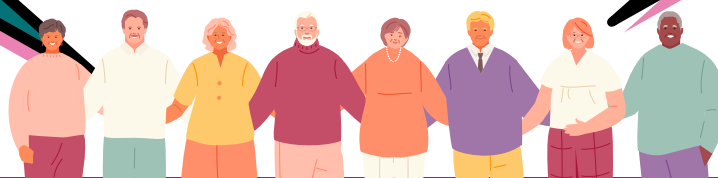
Robyn Holmes, Chief Executive Officer for AGE UK County Durham said: "The wellbeing and dignity of older people is central to what we do at Age UK County Durham This project offers easy and flexible access to a wide range of therapies that promote improved mental wellbeing. Age UK County Durham are proud to lead on this innovative piece of work that continues to offer an invaluable, person centred service to older people living with poor mental health."

Christine Murphy, from Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust is Community Service Manager for Mental Health Services for Older People in County Durham and comments: "This project is an excellent example of how community transformation can support collaboration between voluntary and statutory services to better support the needs of Older people across County Durham."

"My therapy sessions have been a life saver. I know that I will always have things that I will struggle with, but I can now live my life and begin to accept myself for who I am. I don't know where I'd be without the support from Age UK County Durham."

"Thank you for your all your help and support over this past year. You showed up for me at my lowest time. I'm thankful to be out of that place now and finding hope again."

Some of the positive feedback received from people about the service...



Distress Brief Intervention Programme

In October 2022 TEWV, along with local charity Mental Health Concern, piloted England's first Distress Intervention programme in Derwentside.

The project is designed to provide rapid response mental health support to people in distress but who don't require emergency assistance. The service gives people the tools and skills to manage their distress and allows for a flexible person-centred approach.

Referrals to the service can come from Police, GP's, A&E, NHS 111 and other frontline staff. Everyone referred to the scheme to date has been contacted within 24hrs and 70% have showed a reduction in their distress score.

Level 1 partner training is ongoing with 155 staff from partner agencies, such as Primary Care and the North East Ambulance Service, to support staff to have the skills and understanding to provide a compassionate response to people in distress. Feedback has shown that those who've completed the training have increased confidence in supporting those in distress.



“People are delighted we can offer them a prompt appointment and that they can choose between a telephone call or a face-to-face. It's reassuring our patients are getting a 'real person' to speak to which makes a huge difference.” - **A GP**

“I actually feel like I'm taking a step forward thanks to your kindness and patience. You've provided me with lots of tools. I hope you can keep on helping people like you've helped me.” - **A patient**

“As a clinician it's very reassuring to have an experienced sounding board to discuss certain patients and for advice about signposting to appropriate organisations when it is needed.” - **A GP**

The Community Mental Health Transformation Programme is a significant piece of work that means a shift in the way organisations and services work together. It has incredible potential, allowing us to work smarter, providing the right care for people, in the right place and at the right time. The work that has already taken place is starting to make a real difference to local people and we have lots more developments planned over the next three years. For more information contact jo.murray1@nhs.net

You can also visit <https://www.tewv.nhs.uk/about/campaigns-and-programmes/community-mental-health-transformation/county-durham-community-mental-health-transformation/>