

Living Well

Mental Wellbeing and Public Life in the North East



A Report by the Tyne & Wear Citizens
Commission on Mental Health

Executive Summary

Through its listening campaign, the Commission received over 300 testimonies about mental health from across the North East. The Commission analysed these testimonies and identified the common issues that underpinned them before grouping together related issues into the key themes summarised below. Each theme was further explored at the public hearings of the Commission held in Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham, and is discussed in more detail in the main body of the report.



Early Intervention

The Commission heard from young people whose mental health worsened because their school, GP or local mental health service did not intervene early enough. However, their testimonies also identify ways to better embed the practices that would aid early intervention in schools and primary care.

Systems that Serve People

The Commission heard from a range of service users whose encounters with processes and procedures left them feeling as if they, the patient, were the problem. While some of these stories speak to systemic issues, others identify problems that are much more local – though no less consequential – in character. Crucially, these testimonies also identify specific ways to reposition the person at the centre of their care.

No Choice, No Control

The Commission heard from individuals whose experiences of treatment and recovery range from freedom of choice to no choice at all. Their stories outline how inconsistencies in approaches and protocol, as well as limited treatment options, can further disempower the person in their moment of need. However, the Commission also heard how flexibility and choice of treatment can play a key role in helping the patient take control over their recovery.

Suicide

The Commission heard of how suicide affects families and communities from across the North East. Testimonies illustrate the immense pressures that individuals and institutions face when trying to help someone in crisis or cope with the effects of a person taking their own life. However, these stories also identify specific ways to better share the skills and resources needed to assist both those trying to prevent suicide and those trying to deal with its impact.

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Engaging Families and Carers

The Commission heard of the challenges that families and carers face as they try to support their loved ones during their assessment and treatment. While these testimonies point to the complexities of involving families and carers in the assessment process, they also identify effective models for engagement and opportunities to further expand them.

Being Well, Staying Well

The Commission heard from patients and practitioners alike whose understanding of mental health and wellbeing extend far beyond the medical model. These testimonies not only identify a range of non-medical solutions but suggest opportunities for healthcare providers and civil society to promote ways of living well together.

Social Determinants

The Commission received a range of testimonies that identify key social determinants of mental ill-health. These testimonies demonstrate the impact that the benefits system and living conditions can have on personal wellbeing. In so doing, they emphasise the importance of strengthening relationships within civil society and empowering communities to nurture their own wellbeing.



Actions

The Commission applied the methods of broad-based community organising to discern practical solutions to the issues it identified through its listening campaign and public hearings. Each of these solutions is framed as an 'Action' to be put to a key decision maker in local statutory services, NHS Trusts, and civil society organisations.

Will you, **Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust**, work with students from St Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy, North Shields to re-design the CAMHS clinic at Albion Road, North Shields?

Will you, **Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS Foundation Trust**:

- release fifteen of your clinicians to participate in a pilot to promote mental health and emotional resilience in schools?
- work with Tyne and Wear Citizens to excel in your practice of engaging families and carers in line with the Carers Trust Triangle of Care?
- implement the CRAFT Model within the Trust for families and carers?

Will you, **Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**:

- ensure that the signs for the Emergency Department at the Royal Victoria Infirmary show that the service is for mental health as well as physical health emergencies?
- work with Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust to develop mental health training for all your staff who have patient contact?
- develop a best practice protocol for distressed patients needing to travel home from A&E following assessment?
- apply to the Department of Health for permission for the Lloyds pharmacy Royal Victoria Infirmary to be open 100 hours across a seven-day week?
- work with Tyne and Wear Citizens and local pharmacies to ensure that a pharmacy is available 24/7 in Newcastle City Centre?

Will you, **Catherine McKinnell**:

- ensure that the Health and Social Care Committee consider mandatory provision of a counsellor for every English school, and work with us to pilot and evaluate such provision locally?
- work with Tyne & Wear Citizens to highlight in Parliament the need for consistency across CCGs regarding dual GP registration and continuity of care for students and others with multiple addresses?

Will you, **Durham University**:

- provide funding and time for staff from the University Counselling Service to train as Mental Health First Aid Trainers and deliver training to groups of student leaders and staff within your Colleges?

Actions

- ensure that your telephone and email points of contact (at both University and collegiate level) signpost to local out of hours support for students who are seeking help during a time of mental health crisis?
- work with Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust, Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and other partners to develop a suicide protocol, which includes debrief and local support for your respective staff?

Will you, **Newcastle University Student Health and Wellbeing Service**, work with Tyne & Wear Citizens and Newcastle University students to improve the waiting system for students with mental health appointments?

Will you **Newcastle Central Mosque**, run an Open Door Meal by the end of January 2019 and commit six or more of your members to undertake mental health awareness training?

Will you **Northumbria Quakers, All Saints, Newcastle, the College of St Hild and St Bede at Durham University**, and **St John the Baptist, Newcastle**, support **Newcastle Central Mosque** by sharing the resources you have to assist with running the Open Door Meal and developing Open Door Meals in other institutions?

Will you, **Byker Community Trust**, work with Tyne and Wear Citizens and partners to ensure that all rubbish, litter and items which have been fly-tipped are disposed of appropriately on the Byker estate?

While many of these Actions offer solutions to the specific problems that emerge from the testimonies that the Commission received, they do not tackle the deeper systemic issues that these testimonies also demonstrate. To this end, the Commission envisions several of the Actions outlined above, such as the provision of clinicians in schools, as pilots which can be evaluated and implemented on a wider scale.

In addition, the Commission has also identified issues that it has thus far been unable to address through specific Actions. These issues include the effects of punitive sanctions in the benefits system, social determinants such as noise pollution, and lack of choice for patients who would prefer face-to-face counselling. However, the Tyne & Wear Citizens Mental Health Action Team will continue to build relationships and power within civil society to explore and address these issues. The Commission invites interested readers of 'Living Well' to participate in its work going forward.

Who are Tyne & Wear Citizens?

Tyne & Wear Citizens is a broad-based alliance of civil society organisations committed to working together for the common good.

Our Members

All Saints, Newcastle, Church of England • Catholic Parish of the Durham Martyrs • Cedarwood Trust, North Shields • Citizens Advice Newcastle • College of St Hild and St Bede, Durham University • Consult & Design, Sunderland • Children North East, Newcastle • Islamic Diversity Centre, Newcastle • Newcastle Central Mosque • North East Wellbeing • Northern Saints C of E Primary School, Sunderland • Northumbria Area Quaker Meeting • Park View Academy, Chester-le-Street • PROPS North East, Newcastle • St Chad's College, Durham • St Cuthbert's RC Primary School, North Shields • St Gabriel's, Newcastle, Church of England • St John the Baptist, Newcastle, Church of England • St Michael's with St Lawrence, Newcastle, Church of England • St Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy, North Shields • Together Durham • Together Newcastle • Walker Parish Church, Newcastle, Church of England • West End Women and Girls Centre, Newcastle

Our Founding Partners

Church of England Diocese of Durham • Church of England Diocese of Newcastle • Newcastle University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences • Newcastle University Institute for Social Renewal • Newcastle Quakers • Roman Catholic Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Our Community Organisers

Sara Bryson (Community Organiser)

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Contact Sara for further information
about membership and actions.

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Tyne & Wear Citizens is an alliance of Citizens UK,
developing leaders and effective citizens, strengthening civic institutions
and creating systemic change.

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