

Pictured: Experts and Staff in Derby at the Lived Experience Forum

Autumn | Winter 2023

Welcome



The seasons are moving on and we find ourselves looking back over 2023. It's been quite an eventful year for us with the unexpected news that Mental Health Together (MHT) is to be moved into Joined up Care Derbyshire's engagement team from April 2024.

We have been assured that this will not mean any practical changes to the way our service is delivered. More details will be available in a future e-bulletin but if you have any questions or concerns about the planned move, please do contact us.

For anyone not familiar with MHT's role, we are here to support people with lived experience of mental health services to share their valuable insights of what 'good' looks like. In the following pages you will read about how some of our Experts by Experience have been doing just that. They share what it means to them to have an influential voice.

We hope you enjoy catching up with our work. We'd love to hear from you if you'd like to join our membership or even consider becoming an Expert by Experience yourself (see back page for more details).

Get in touch with us



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healthwatchderbyshire.co.uk/mental-health-together



'Freepost HEALTHWATCH DERBYSHIRE'

Highlights

- **Introducing Living Well staff member, Josie.**
- **A look at some of the work our Experts have done.**
- **Update on physical health check work.**
- **Take a look at our new website.**

Transforming Community Mental Health Services

Mental Health Together has been supporting Experts by Experience to help design and develop the new 'Living Well' mental health community service. This is a national transformation of services and in Derbyshire it began in the High Peak.

Experts are working to shape the vision and values of the new service. They are part of a 'Collaborative' of local people – experts, voluntary sector, social care, and health – who meet regularly to design the new model in each area.

You can find out much more about Living Well and Derby Wellbeing here: livingwellderbyshire.co.uk

or by scanning the QR code below. In Derby city the service is called 'Derby Wellbeing' instead of 'Living Well' but it is exactly the same service model.

This change is rolling out right across the county so if you'd like to get involved, please do contact us.

scan me with your
phone camera



Introduction to our newest team member

Last time we shared that our team has expanded as the community mental health transformation project rolls out across Derbyshire.

Our latest team member joined our Living Well workers in February 2023, just after publication of our last newsletter, so we would like to officially welcome Josie.



"Hello, I am Josie.

I have been in the team for 8 months now as Living Well Admin Support Worker. My background as a voluntary Telephone Befriender at a registered charity 'Careline Calling' places me well. Through telephone befriending and my own lived experience, I understand how to actively listen and support others. I have strong administrative experience.

In my role with Mental Health Together, so far I have been busy supporting Experts by Experience and individuals who consent to give feedback on the NHS services they are receiving to shape Living Well community mental health services."



Pictured: Ronique and Josie at an engagement event

Daniel's work improving talking therapies



Pictured: Daniel winning a 'freestyle beard' competition

At the end of last year Daniel was struggling with his mental health and decided that some counselling might help. He went to the Insight website which has since been rebranded Everyturn and used their online referral assistant Limbic chatbot to try and book some counselling.

However, because Daniel admitted to having thoughts of self-harm at times, the chatbot was unable to book any counselling, and instead directed him to call 999, or the Crisis Team. To add further frustration the chatbot then told him it was a pleasure to get to know him and asked if it had been helpful. When told it hadn't, it finished by congratulating Daniel on taking the important step towards better mental health and then left him with a random 'favourite quote' before saying goodbye and hanging up.

The experience left Daniel feeling worse than ever. He still wanted some counselling, and simply having an appointment booked would have helped. Daniel wanted to make sure others weren't

left feeling the same way and had some suggestions for improvements to the self-referral system. MHT supported Daniel to have a meeting with Everyturn to discuss the issues. As a result, changes have been made to the Limbic chatbot wording which will benefit people both in Derbyshire, and elsewhere in the country. Everyturn is also looking into a more considered response to people who are struggling with thoughts of suicide/self-harm which does not automatically result in them not getting a service.

“Feedback is a gift, and we always welcome patient experience reports. As a result of Daniel's feedback, I have reviewed the Limbic access tool language and have made amendments to the referral process and the language when screening, to ensure patients are able to access the service more smoothly. I have worked closely with Limbic who have also appreciated the opportunity to review the risk reporting process on the access tool to improve patient experience.”

Mona Stylianou, Principle Clinical Lead at Everyturn Talking Therapy

“I am very pleased that they've listened and are going to make changes to the system.”

Daniel, Expert by Experience

Shelagh's work with Mental Health Act assessors

As someone with experience of being assessed herself Shelagh is very keen to make sure this experience is as least harmful as possible, and avoided altogether whenever possible. For the past couple of years Shelagh has attended the AMHP (approved mental health professional) meetings to give the benefit of her insight and experience.



Pictured: Expert by Experience Shelagh

Shelagh was actively involved in designing the annual survey that is sent out to everyone who has been assessed each year in Derbyshire. Changes were made to the survey because of her input; including for the first-time people's views on what, if anything, might have avoided the need for an assessment in the first place. We've been pleased to hear recently about a new joint working protocol between the crisis teams and the AMHP teams. Our Experts have been consulted on this protocol and Shelagh has kindly agreed to give her ongoing advice as part of a task and finish group.

Shelagh has also taken part this summer in a study by Oxford University (Co-pact study). The study is trying to find ways of improving the experiences of people from minority backgrounds. It is well known that they are over-represented in the numbers of people being assessed each year under the Mental Health Act. Derby was one of six cities chosen for the research and Shelagh was able to contribute at two workshops from the perspective of her dual heritage background. The final recommendations will be published later this year.

“

Mental Health Together has given me the confidence and the space to use my voice of experience to sometimes effect positive change ... a special thank you to those who have taken the time to listen and who have included me in their meetings.

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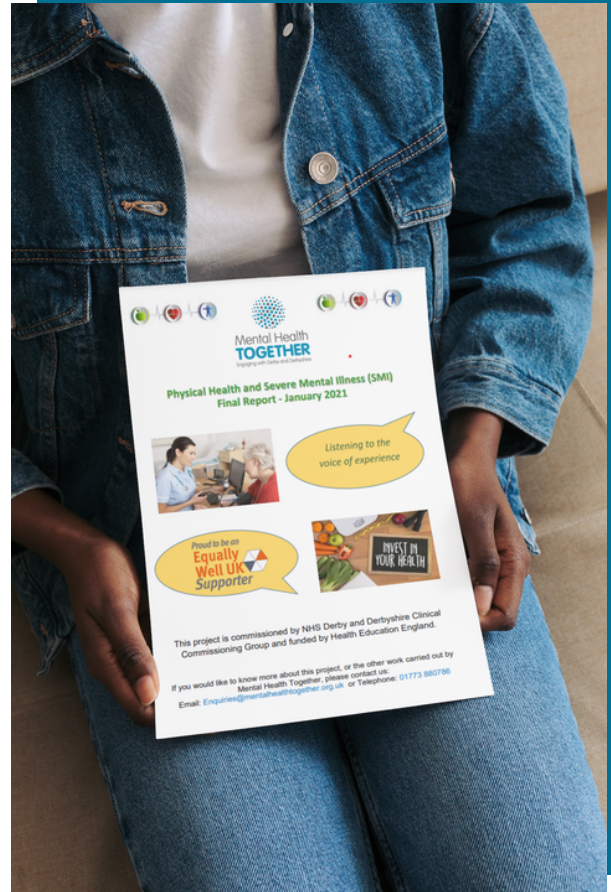
Improving physical health checks for people with serious mental illness (SMI)

Some of you may remember the engagement work we did in 2019/20 which resulted in our Physical Health and Serious Mental Illness report.

The report contains many quotes from people living with a serious mental illness and their experience of trying to stay physically healthy. We specifically asked them about their experience of being called for their SMI annual health check by their GP practice. We discovered that about 50% of people we talked to didn't know they were entitled to an annual check and yet 75% of them were worried about their physical health.

“ Sometimes we are so worried about the mental health of those we care about that we forget their physical health. Remember the NHS annual check-up they are entitled to and encourage them to attend. ”

Rose, Expert Carer



Next steps

Joined Up Care Derbyshire has responded to our findings in various ways which will hopefully create improvements to people's experience. One of the actions was to produce two promotional videos. The first video is to help people living with a serious mental health condition understand the importance of their annual health check and how to get the most out of it for themselves. The second video is for GPs across Derby and Derbyshire to understand how to provide a health check that feels both helpful and supportive. Several of our Experts provided insights and questions for these videos which help GPs understand what it might be like to be stood in their shoes.

You can check out these videos on the NHS Derby and Derbyshire ICB YouTube Channel.

Please share them with your contacts to make the most of these important messages.



scan me with your phone camera to access the videos

John helps to transform community mental health services

"Hiya everyone, I am John Bentley, a 50 year old male with a long background of mental health from paranoid schizophrenia onto anxiety and depression disorder. I have 30 years of lived experience, some happy, some not so but I keep bouncing back and will continue to do so.

"I have experience of many mental health organisations, Derbyshire Mind, Rethink and Mental Health Together. In my earlier years of talking to doctors and even on wards I have felt I haven't been listened to by many healthcare professionals.

"In the past I have had trouble due to bullying in the workplace and by neighbours and family which triggered my first mental breakdown.



“ I am now well known by a lot of the teams within Derby as an Expert by Experience and feel respected and gained trust since joining MHT. ”

"I have been given several opportunities to voice my experiences within mental health services and give 30 years' worth of advice to improve services. I have kept out of hospital for 14 years by taking medication, eating healthily most of the time, exercise such as walking, cycling, keeping active mentally and physically plus mixing with positive people.

"MHT has given me experience with working on the Standard Operating Procedure for Living Well, making changes to the document. I have worked on the risk assessment process on SystemOne (IT system used by many healthcare professionals) and the Safety Plan for Living Well via an online workshop with professionals.

"Also, I was given the opportunity to give a ten-minute presentation at the Derby Wellbeing Collaborative meeting.

"Now my next opportunity is to open a new Wellbeing Drop-in which I have co-created at Staywell in Derby. The need for a drop-in is felt by many. So please support me in this as much as possible as this could be a great opportunity for everyone to come together and socialise and support each other."

CHATTERBOX CAFE



WELLBEING DROP-IN

**1ST AND 3RD WEDNESDAY OF
THE MONTH
12PM-1PM**

**A FRIENDLY, SAFE SPACE TO MEET
OTHERS, CHAT, MAKE FRIENDS**

**STAYWELL DERBY,
11 ST MARYS GATE, DERBY DE1 3JR**

A new drop-in opportunity started by people with lived experience

Nina explains how she gained confidence to use her experience

“Many thanks to Mental Health Together who initially helped me to become a voice for those of us with mental illness/disorders, directing me towards opportunities for involvement. I began by joining in with smaller meeting groups with encouragement from Niki and Kath and discovered that I can be useful in the volunteer workplace.

“One such opportunity was to sit on the panel who are setting up the new PICU (Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit) in Derby which will open in 2024. Often, I did not feel well enough to attend the monthly meetings but as they were only an hour a month and, as I was offering my input as a volunteer, I found I quickly gained confidence to share my views. If I had realised that I would be sitting in a meeting full of directors, psychiatrists, etc. one of whom had treated me as a very ill patient in hospital, I would not have thought I could face that! However, as my confidence grew, so did my input. And as a funny aside, I believe my psychiatrist was as shocked and uneasy as I was now working with him as a professional. Looking back over the 18 months or so I can see how much that work has helped in my own recovery. I'm not fully well very often, but I realise I can still be useful and can still be a voice for those of us in mental health treatment, regardless.

Remember, we don't need to be symptom-free to help others and to have input. I think in realising this it brings a sense of hope for our futures, with or without mental illness/disorders.



Pictured: Expert by Experience Nina

“I was also offered a role working alongside a senior lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University training AMHP (approved mental health professional) students. Yes, it did feel like a huge jump that I might fail at due to nerves, but I did it, and he has called me up numerous times since, asking me to do the same piece of work every six months or so. I find that doing these jobs in a voluntary capacity, despite the offer of pay, gives me the ability to go ahead as I don't feel the same pressure that I would if I was doing it in a paid capacity. Ironically, I now see there is no difference - because I treat the various voluntary jobs seriously as though they are paid work, it's really no different.

“The most recent opportunity that came my way was to do the Peer Support Worker training which, once qualified, enables you to work with others as a support to them based on your own lived experience. I used to think that people only do psychiatric nursing, psychology, etc because they have overcome all their problems. In the PSW course I found that is far from the case.

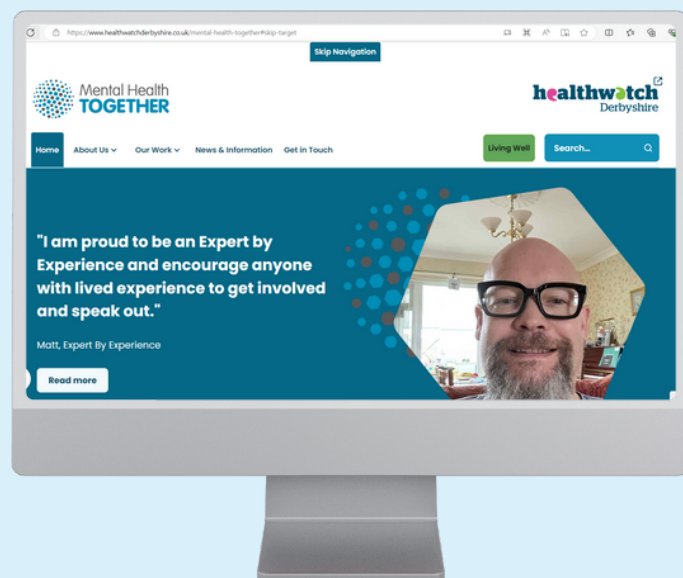
“We can adopt a recovery mindset and still have our mental health problems and help others along the way too. Let's face it everyone on this planet has some form of struggle or tragedy going on. All the opportunities that MHT has offered me have given me more confidence in the workplace, despite me still only being there in a voluntary capacity. It's a journey I'm on, and I can foresee that in the future, maybe in 1-2 years, I'll be able to enter paid employment as a peer support worker or another role. If it hadn't have been for MHT I don't think I would have started this journey yet.”

We have a new website!

Our website has been refreshed giving it a more accessible and friendlier feel. There's a whole section dedicated to our Living Well work as well as lots of information about our Experts by Experience and High Peak mental health engagement group.

You can also sign up to receive our bi-monthly e-bulletins and download copies of our reports and Good Practice Guide.

You can access the website here:
healthwatchderbyshire.co.uk/mental-health-together



Interested in being an Expert by Experience?



Mental Health Together believes that people with first-hand experience, and those who care for them, should have a say in future services. This is why we are recruiting Experts by Experience, people who have personal or caring experience of mental health services.

Give us a call or send us an email and we will arrange a chat with you. We can help you think about the best ways to use your experience to make a difference. We will take time to understand your needs and your skills and what time you have available to offer. We can also introduce you to our other Experts to share support, knowledge, ideas etc.

Do you want to involve the voice of lived experience in meetings?

Our Good Practice Guide is now available to download from our website.

We produced this guide based on the collective wisdom and experience of our Experts. It helps professionals to give people with lived experience the best possible opportunity to take part fully and effectively in meetings and projects.



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