



## Welcome to your March 2022 Edition of CNTW's Membership Newsletter



### Message from your Corporate Affairs Team

Welcome to your March edition of your newsletter.

Let's all 'Spring into March' the month where daffodils start to appear and birds start to nest. The days are longer, the nights are warmer, and we can finally put our heavy coats and gloves in the back of the cupboard. Winter is gone and that means it's time for us all to be able to spread our wings after a long stormy winter. Evenings are now starting to get lighter as they gradually shift to become equal in length to mornings, a process which officially takes place on the Spring Equinox and from Sunday 20th March.

We all know some truly inspirational woman whether it is your mother, daughter, grandma, a nurse or a movie star, and on the 8th March its Inspirational woman's day. Not forgetting Sunday 27th March is Mothering Sunday, share your love with your inspirational woman.

Can you believe two years ago on March 23<sup>rd</sup> 2020: the Prime Minister addressed the Country to inform us all that we would be going into lock down measures, which came in to place on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020. It was a very frightening time for us all, we have all at some point struggled with the restrictions that we have had to endure.

So, two years on what have we learnt? We have learnt to appreciate one another, to love and hold those close to us that little bit tighter. We have learnt that together we are better, and we've learnt to look after one another. March 20<sup>th</sup> its International Day of Happiness – A Day to be happy. Do something for your own happiness – be selfish and make time to do something you really enjoy, get moving outside, learn something new or write down three things you're grateful for. Remember, its ok not to be ok, you are never alone.



### Team reflects on success of Peer Supporters in Mental Health and Disability services

A year after introducing 'peer supporters' into mental health and disability services across Cumbria, the teams are reflecting on their success.

Explaining what a Peer Supporter can bring to a clinical service, Peer Support Operational Manager Faye Atkinson said: "Every Peer Supporter's role is a little bit different, particularly depending on what type of service they are part of. Some Peer's work with Carer's and have developed peer led carer support groups, as well as making individual calls to carers to check on their wellbeing. They might offer visits to people who we are supporting in the community. Some help service users to engage with care planning, to ensure they're involved in steering their own treatment.

"Many of them are involved with the North Cumbria Recovery College too, leading classes ranging from emotional resilience, 'draw and talk', walking groups, Dungeons and Dragons, and 'happy mums' sessions.

"But everywhere they work, Peer Support staff offer connection and a mutual shared experience to the people we support." The first nine Peer Supporters joined CNTW in January 2021, working in a range of services including the Crisis Team, specialist Children's Learning Disability Team, and a number of inpatient wards. Starting their new roles just before another national lockdown at the start of the year was a challenge, but every Peer got through it successfully with support at all levels.

The introduction of Peer Supporters to CNTW's North Cumbrian services has gone even better than Faye and her team expected. "We actually advertised eight Peer Supporter posts," she explains, "but so many excellent candidates responded to the advert that we actually ended up hiring nine Peers."

"We were very pleased to find that every service team was really curious about Peer Support, wanting to learn more about how it could help them deliver better care and support service users more effectively. Each team who has been joined by a Peer Supporter has given them the time to explore and develop this new role, which is so valuable.

"The leadership team in North Cumbria have really invested in their commitment to having Peer Support become an integral part of all services. They have worked really closely with us, always been open to ideas and suggestions and been very supportive from the start."

One year later, there are now 22 Peer Supporters working for CNTW across North Cumbria, and recruitment of eight more is underway.

The first intake of Peers were also joined by Emma Wakefield and Tyne Percival, who joined the North Cumbria team as Senior Peer Supporters having previously worked as Peer Supporters elsewhere in the Trust.

Using their previous experience, Emma and Tyne placed an emphasis on intensive mentorship within each Peer Supporter's main place of work, supporting them to embed and integrate into their roles in teams across North Cumbria. As Senior Peer Supporters, Emma and Tyne also deliver training and participate in leadership-level discussions and meetings, influencing the Trust to embrace peer support at all levels. The team feel that this support has been key to their success and rapid growth in North Cumbria.

Tyne Percival explains, "We put this intense support in place based on what we'd learned from introducing Peer Support in other localities and teams. As there is usually only one Peer Supporter on a ward or in a team, it can be an isolating role; other healthcare professionals almost always have someone else in their profession as part of a team to bounce ideas off.

Unfortunately, we have seen Peers leave in past because of this lack of support around them. So, in North Cumbria, we wanted to start strong with good support in place for each new Peer. And as a result, all the Peer Supporters who joined us at start of 2021 are still here and developing in their roles."

The team are also focussing on a career progression pathway in the Trust for those Peer Supporters who want to develop further. Six of the Peers have also completed the first ever Higher Education England Peer Support Education Programme, with others hopefully joining the next cohort.

To learn more on Peer Supporter click [here](#)



### Trust statement on Conversion Therapy

The Trust has made a public commitment to stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community and support a ban on conversion therapy in the UK.

The term 'conversion therapy' is a type of treatment that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to others and seeks to change them on that basis.

Simon Pearson, Chair of the Trust LGBTQ+ Staff Network said: "This is a monumental and highly welcomed decision by the Trust. It demonstrates to staff, service users and the wider population to whom we serve, that we are accepted without exclusion, and we are afforded the respect and recognition for our individuality. It is a tremendous feeling knowing that the Trust stands by and supports all LGBTQ+ people and encourages us to be our authentic selves in an inclusive environment."

The position statement provides assurances that as well as supporting a ban on conversion therapy, the Trust will respect the identities of those people with diverse gender and sexuality expressions as well as ensuring that CNTW is a safe place to both work and receive services.

The Trust also commits raise awareness and provide education about the harm caused by 'conversion therapy' and to acknowledge that all LGBTQ+ questioning individuals should be able to access therapeutic support to make sense of their emotions and identity.

James Duncan, Chief Executive said 'We are committed to standing with our LGBTQ+ community and are determined to ensure that anyone accessing therapy should be able to do so without threat or fear of being told they should change a fundamental part of themselves.'

CNTW's position statement on conversion therapy and LGBTQ+ patients

"Conversion therapy" is the term for a type of treatment that assumes certain sexual orientations or gender identities are inferior to others and seeks to change them on that basis.

The term can be associated with the use of any harmful practices that attempt to change an individuals' sexual orientation or gender identity.

Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust believes that sexual orientation and gender identity is not a 'disorder' or mental health 'problem' that requires change and treatment.

We will:

- Stand in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community and support the ban on conversion therapy in the UK
- Respect the identities of those people with diverse gender and sexuality expressions
- Ensure that CNTW is a safe place for those people with diverse gender and sexuality expressions to work and receive services
- Acknowledge that all LGBTQ+ questioning individuals should be able to access therapeutic support to make sense of their emotions and identity, but also be determined that anyone accessing therapy should do so without threat or fear of being told they should change a fundamental part of themselves.
- Raise awareness and provide education about the harm caused by "conversion therapy"

Ken Jarrold, CBE, Chairman  
James Duncan, Chief Executive  
Simon Pearson, LGBTQ+ Staff Network Chair



### Young Carers Action Day: Wednesday 16th March

Young Carers Action Day is an annual event, organised each year by Carers Trust.

It's a day for raising public awareness of young carers and young adult carers, the pressures and challenges they face, and the incredible contribution they make by caring for their family members and friends.

It is also a day to call for more action to support young and young adult carers and give them the extra bit of help they need to live full and healthy lives.

The day attracts widespread participation and public attention. Each year Carers Trust secures widespread coverage of the day in both national and regional TV, radio and print media.

Young Carers Action Day also attracts huge social media engagement with young and young adult carers all over the UK, sharing images, messages and other content like video, blogs and art. In the last few years #YoungCarersActionDay has trended on Twitter!

For more information click [here](#)



### World Sleep Day: Friday 18th March

At least 1 in 3 people will suffer from insomnia during their lifetime. Our 24/7 culture can mean it's harder to get a good night's sleep and poor sleep has been linked to poor physical and mental health. This means that educating ourselves about 'normal sleep' is more important than ever before.

Top tips to improve sleep include:

- Recording your sleep using a sleep diary
- Simple lifestyle interventions, for example exercising during the day and screen-free wind-down period before bed
- Creating the right environment for sleep – a calm, cool room with minimal disruptions
- Reduce caffeine and nicotine intake
- Reducing alcohol consumption
- Natural light exposure – try to spend time outside in natural light every day
- Setting a regular wake up time, and going to bed when you feel sleepy

For free resources click [here](#)



### Trust secures funding to bring back volunteering scheme

The Trust has successfully secured a funding bid to re-introduce a volunteering scheme, aimed at giving people living in the community independence.

The Voluntary Services team are now preparing to roll out the Community Befriending scheme, 10 years after its inception. The scheme will be available for service users who either have a planned imminent discharge date or are living in the community and using community services.

Service users will be matched up with a volunteer befriender and will meet weekly to do an activity they enjoy. The scheme aims to promote people's independence and recovery and break down stigma around mental health and learning disabilities.

Voluntary Services Manager, Wendy Spratt, said: "We have found many service users have said they feel isolated, especially within the last two years because of the pandemic, and often don't see anyone apart from healthcare professionals at an appointment. "The scheme will allow service users to meet with someone and do the things that we often take for granted, like going for a walk or meeting for a cup of tea or visiting museums and galleries. It's the little things that can have the biggest impact."

The renewal of the scheme has been made possible thanks to funding from NHS England and Improvement.

NHS Trusts and Ambulance Trusts can bid for funding as part of a voluntary service manager collaborative. The team had to demonstrate the scheme would help with pressures with the aim to get volunteers back into NHS workplaces and volunteer roles. A healthcare professional from CNTW can refer a service user to the scheme where they will also provide support to the allocated volunteer befriender. The volunteer will be able to choose who they match with, taking into account information from the referral form such as the service user's social interests and location. The scheme will give people a sense of normality and helps free some time for carers as well.

Wendy added: "The scheme will help alleviate social isolation and offer service users opportunities they might not otherwise have had."

The team also hopes it will help stop people who have been discharged coming back into inpatient services. Not only will the scheme help service users, it will also be beneficial to the volunteers. The volunteers will be able to make a difference in their local community and learn new skills. The funding has also enabled Voluntary Services to expand its team. Billy Anderson has been employed on secondment as a Volunteer Coordinator and will be leading the rollout of the scheme.

He said: "The main thing we hope to do is make a difference. We're at a very good starting point and can learn from how the scheme was run before and hope it can continue for years to come."

Bethany Stuart has been volunteering as a community befriender in the Trust for many years. She began volunteering to improve her CV when applying to study Psychology at university. What was initially going to be six months, has turned into nearly 10 years.

Bethany visits a service user once a week. "We got to know each other and now have a proper friendship," she explained. "It might not be cool because the service user is in her 70s, but she's one of my best friends. She's a massive part of my life and I can't imagine not seeing her."

For more information about the Community Befriending Scheme, please contact [volunteer@cntw.nhs.uk](mailto:volunteer@cntw.nhs.uk)

CNTW has over 100 volunteers who donate their time, energy and enthusiasm in a wide variety of activities to improve the experience of service users and carers.

CNTW is a leading provider of mental health and disability services.



### World Bipolar Day: Wednesday 30th March

The vision of World Bipolar Day (WBD) is to bring world awareness to bipolar disorders and to eliminate social stigma. Through international collaboration, the goal of World Bipolar Day is to bring the world population information about bipolar disorders that will educate and improve sensitivity towards the illness.

Bipolar disorder can be a life-long mental health problem that mainly affects your mood. It affects how you feel, and your mood can change massively. You can experience episodes of mania and depression.

You may feel well between these times. When your mood changes, you might see changes in your energy levels or how you act. Bipolar disorder used to be called manic depression.

Symptoms of bipolar disorder can be severe. They can affect areas of your life, such as work, school and relationships.

For more information click [here](#)

If you need urgent help, call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

<p><b>North Tyneside and Northumberland</b></p> <p>Adults - 0800 652 2861</p> <p>Children and young people - 0800 652 2861</p> <p>Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07887 625 27</p>	<p><b>North Cumbria</b></p> <p>Adults - 0800 652 2855</p> <p>Children and young people - 0800 652 2865</p> <p>Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 0779 595 6226</p>
<p><b>Newcastle and Gateshead</b></p> <p>Adults - 0800 652 2863</p> <p>Children and young people - 0800 652 2864</p> <p>Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07919 228 548</p>	<p><b>Sunderland and South Tyneside</b></p> <p>Adults - 0800 652 2867</p> <p>Children and young people - 0800 652 2868</p> <p>Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07889 036 280</p>

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**Rewarding Welcome, Rewarding Career**  
It's an exciting time to join us here at Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust as we continue to develop and invest in our services, as well as our staff.

We are looking for caring, empathetic, enthusiastic and motivated individuals who have a passion to improve the lives of our patients. We have new opportunities for Registered Nurses and Doctors Trustwide across all of our inpatient services. These vacancies include an attractive £3000\* recruitment incentive – a Rewarding Welcome for a Rewarding Career.

If you'd like to apply for one of our vacancies visit: [www.cntw.nhs.uk/reward](http://www.cntw.nhs.uk/reward) and leave us your details and we will be in touch.



### Membership

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Discovering  
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Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust St. Nicholas Hospital, Jubilee Road Gosforth Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3XT

0191 2456827

