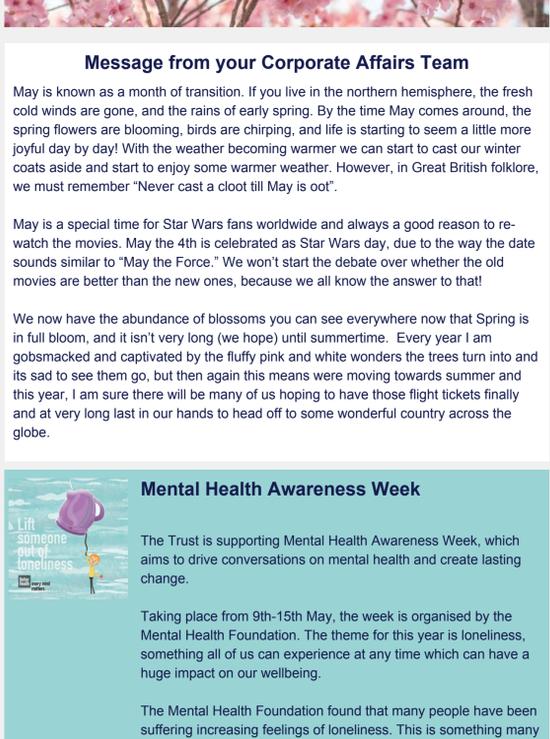




Welcome to your May 2022 Edition of CNTW's Membership Newsletter



Message from your Corporate Affairs Team

May is known as a month of transition. If you live in the northern hemisphere, the fresh cold winds are gone, and the rains of early spring. By the time May comes around, the spring flowers are blooming, birds are chirping, and life is starting to seem a little more joyful day by day! With the weather becoming warmer we can start to cast our winter coats aside and start to enjoy some warmer weather. However, in Great British folklore, we must remember "Never cast a clot till May is oot".

May is a special time for Star Wars fans worldwide and always a good reason to re-watch the movies. May the 4th is celebrated as Star Wars day, due to the way the date sounds similar to "May the Force." We won't start the debate over whether the old movies are better than the new ones, because we all know the answer to that!

We now have the abundance of blossoms you can see everywhere now that Spring is in full bloom, and it isn't very long (we hope) until summertime. Every year I am gobsmacked and captivated by the fluffy pink and white wonders the trees turn into and its sad to see them go, but then again this year were moving towards summer and this year, I am sure there will be many of us hoping to have those flight tickets finally and at very long last in our hands to head off to some wonderful country across the globe.



Mental Health Awareness Week

The Trust is supporting Mental Health Awareness Week, which aims to raise conversations on mental health and create lasting change.

Taking place from 9th-15th May, the week is organised by the Mental Health Foundation. The theme for this year is loneliness, something all of us can experience at any time which can have a huge impact on our wellbeing.

The Mental Health Foundation found that many people have been suffering increasing feelings of loneliness. This is something many of us experienced during the Covid-19 pandemic and is still being felt by a number of us now.

James Duncan, our Chief Executive said: "Mental health can affect anyone at any time, with one in four people experiencing problems with their mental health at some point in their lives.

"Loneliness can have a big impact on our mental health and by raising awareness of the affects, we can take steps to address it. We encourage anyone who may be feeling lonely to the point where it is affecting their mental health and wellbeing to reach out to others to gain the support they need."

If you're feeling lonely, there are a number of ways to boost your wellbeing this Mental Health Awareness Week:

- Be more aware of the present moment, including your feelings and thoughts, your body and the world around you.
- Even the smallest act can count, a thank you or a kind word. Larger acts, such as volunteering, can improve your mental wellbeing and help you build social networks.
- Learning new skills can give a sense of achievement and a new confidence. Try online courses, start learning to play an instrument or a new language. This can also help you meet new people.
- Take a walk, cycle or do some exercise. Find the activity you enjoy and make it part of your routine.
- Connect with family and friends – give someone a call for a catch up.

You can find more support and advice on the [Every Mind Matters – Loneliness webpage](#). [Here](#).



Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week

Maternal Mental Health Awareness Week ran from 2nd-8th May and is dedicated to talking about mental health problems during and after pregnancy.

Organised by the Maternal Mental Health Alliance, the week aims to raise awareness of perinatal mental health problems, whilst changing attitudes and helping families access the information, care and support they need.

This year's theme is 'The Power of Connection'. While welcoming a new baby into the world is a cause for celebration, it can be a difficult time for many. If you are struggling with your mental health, you are not alone. One in five women experience a perinatal mental health problem and there are a number of ways you can get support.

Talking Therapies
Talking Therapies services (also known as IAPT, Improving Access to Psychological Therapies) offer a range of options to help people overcome common mental health problems like anxiety and depression. You can find your local service and self-refer [here](#).

Perinatal Community Mental Health Teams
The teams work with people who have a range of mental health issues during pregnancy, childbirth and early motherhood. Our Perinatal Community Mental Health Team is accredited by the Royal College of Psychiatrists' Perinatal Quality Network, in recognition of the excellent standards of care they provide.

Postnatal Depression
Around one in 10 women experience postnatal depression after having a baby. Our award-winning range of self-help guides includes a booklet on postnatal depression. The guide explains some of the causes, explores ways of coping and managing postnatal depression and signposts to further support. You can find the guide [here](#)

Support Groups
Our community mental health teams host support a number of support groups. 'Finding Our Rhythm', which is an online perinatal mother and baby group, and GroBrain, an 8-week course about infant brain development and how parents can impact this.

The Virtual Hangout Group began during lockdown when face to face groups were no longer possible. The group is open to both pregnant woman and postnatal woman. The aim of this group is to provide a safe and easily accessible space for women where they can share parts of their journey with others.

The "Finding Our Feet" Perinatal Walk and Talk has recently restarted following Covid. The group meet once a week and it is for anyone open to the Perinatal Team. This group encourages women to get outside with their babies and enjoy some gentle exercise whilst also enabling them to connect with other Mums.

The Trust has received some brilliant feedback for these groups.

"I find the walk and talk really helpful! It's something I look forward to every week, it makes me feel less alone and a safe space to openly share any feelings or worries I have. This is through talking to the other Mams about their experiences as well as mine."

"The Peer Support led group is wonderful and is a very good opportunity to connect with people in a similar situation to my own. Everyone there is lovely and really understanding. I have learnt a lot of valuable things from it and it helps me see things from different perspectives and meet people I probably wouldn't connect with. It has such a friendly and welcoming atmosphere and I always feel safe in the group."

"Being a mammy is isolating enough, your world as you know it is never the same again and that's hard enough without adding mental health into the mixture so having a group of likeminded mummies is like a safe haven and a lovely community where you can say anything and know you won't be judged. We share stories of our babies', good and bad, and share out tips and tricks to make our lives that little bit easier. We smile, laugh, cry but at the end of the group we are all just HUMAN."

"Grobrain group has really opened my eyes to how good of a Mam I really am. It's shown me the things I'm doing are right by my daughter and motherhood is different for everyone. Hearing other mams' stories has really opened my eyes to the mental health and the issues I've battled with are so much more common than I thought. Even something as small as knowing that has helped me be more honest about my mental health which makes me an even better Mam."

"Both baby groups have really helped me with my confidence and it's helped me learn more about my son and how his brain works and what signs he gives for different things. It's massively helped my mental health as I thought I wasn't a good enough mam because I didn't know what he was wanting or how his little brain worked so it had an impact on my mental health negatively but both the baby groups have really helped me and it's helped my mental health."

"The Grobrain group really helps me be more confident in my parenting by helping me know how her brain works and develops as well as being able to share similar experiences with other parents. I also LOVE learning as much as I can about my baby so it makes my week a little bit better."

"Being pregnant and having a baby is an emotional time for a mam, add mental health into the mix and it's an emotional roller coaster of conflicting and intrusive feelings. The group has helped me to connect with other mams, who don't expect me to be happy all of the time, and actually it's ok not to be ok and to need additional support. Connecting with other mams and babies who struggle with mental health difficulties has made me a stronger person and mam for my baby boy."

"I can connect and bond better with my baby since attending group, because I'm more able to manage my emotions and thoughts after talking to professionals and people going through a similar experience."

If you are pregnant or a new mother and are worried about your mental health, please speak to your GP who will help you to access the support you need.



Deaf Awareness Week

2-8 May was Deaf Awareness Week and this year's theme is 'inclusion'

The Northeast Mental Health and Deafness service is raising awareness of the importance of supporting people who are deaf / deaf blind to access mental health services.

The service is a TEWW and CNTW partnership service for deaf and deaf/blind people aged 18 years or older who mainly use British Sign Language to communicate and who have mental health problems.

The team, work with local community mental health teams, offering assessment, treatment and advice, whilst ensuring that communications is accessible and meets people's needs.

Emmanuel Chan, nurse at Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust said: "Deafness is an invisible disability. Deaf people do not always talk about this or expect others to treat them differently, and as a result, their communication and accessibility needs are not regularly met. This can lead to negative impacts on their access to information and services and responses towards care and support.

He also added: "The Northeast Mental Health and Deafness service makes a huge difference to people living across the northeast as it helps them to feel more connected and included in their care. It's so important that people are aware of the service and the support we can provide, so we've decided to run a number of activities during Deaf Awareness Week to help raise awareness."

Andrew McMinn, Associate Director for Neurological and Specialist Services at Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust said: "Deafness is an invisible disability. Deaf people do not always talk about this or expect others to treat them differently, and as a result, their communication and accessibility needs are not regularly met. This can lead to negative impacts on their access to information and services and responses towards care and support."

Graham, a carer from Durham has experience of using the service and said: "The Mental Health and Deafness service has been really helpful in advocating concerns about my communication needs and helping me to get the support that I need. I've been able to access a Deaf personal assistant through social services, which now helps me to communicate without any barriers. I attend my wife's care meeting and they help make sure that I'm understood and listened to, and this has allowed me to feel more informed in my wife's care and the support available to me.

"The Deaf wellbeing group they run has also allowed me to meet fellow Deaf people and their carers and I no longer feel as alone as I did. They've helped me to accept the changes that are happening more, and as a result, I've felt more able to take break and look after myself and focus my interests and hobbies.

"I've even been introduced to more technology for Deaf people and how to access BSL information online, which is fantastic. Overall, the service has opened up a whole new world to me and I'm excited about ongoing learning and support in a signing environment."



Finding work with CNTW's Individual Placement and Support (IPS) service

MS has been working with the Trust's Individual Placement Support (IPS) service since May 2021.

She moved to the UK in 2008 and her life changed after being diagnosed with bipolar disorder the following year. MS describes this period of her life as traumatic. "I was happy to come to England and was enthusiastic about starting a new life with my new husband, but it was a massive culture change," she explained.

"I had this new illness and didn't know what was happening." Over the next few years, MS was admitted to a psychiatric hospital many times. It is only recently that she feels confident she will not return to hospital.

A lot of that new-found confidence is down to the fact that MS now has a job. Her care coordinator recognised MS was keen to work again and referred her to the IPS service.

IPS supports people who are being treated by the Trust's community mental health teams to find, or stay in, paid work. Since launching in 2019, the service has helped almost 200 people into jobs, ranging from nursing, to administration, construction, and everything in between. The team also help people who are struggling at work to keep their job.

The team uses a 'place then train' approach to helping people with severe mental health issues to find, or stay in, employment. They focus on giving each person intensive, personalised support to help them find a job that is well-suited to them. IPS staff can also liaise with employers to explain the adaptations or adjustments someone might need due to their mental health. Once someone is in work, the employer and the employee then receive ongoing support from the IPS team.

MS was referred to Employment Specialist Louise Tindill. "I recognised her passion straight away," Louise said. "I thought to myself, 'I've got a star on my hands here'. MS has so much to offer, she's bright, intelligent and experienced with a degree in science."

Louise started to look for roles that MS would be suited to. Potential jobs ranged from a peer supporter in the NHS (someone who uses their own lived experience to help others) to a translator; MS is fluent in six community languages.

With Louise's help, MS created a CV and was supported back into employment. She now has a full-time job at a charity and says going back to work has changed her life.

"Louise made me feel so positive," MS said. "I was independent a long time ago, but I had lost touch with my independence. Louise made me realise that person I used to be is still inside me. "Now, I'm earning my own money and doing my own thing. I was so happy when I got my first pay cheque."

Louise says it's down to MS's hard work that she secured a job, having never missed an appointment or deadline.

"When I first met MS she was very hesitant and low in confidence after having a long time not working," Louise said. "I'm really proud of how far she's come. MS is proof that people with mental issues can recover and go on to do what they want."

MS's home life has changed considerably too. She says her family are more supportive. "Things have improved for everyone," she said. "I think people's perception of you changes when you're working. My son used to say, 'Mummy doesn't go to work, she stays in the house', but now my son and husband help out more around the house."

MS has also started taking driving lessons.

Louise believes there's a role for MS in the NHS. "I think she would be great at supporting people coming into mental health services because of her lived experience."

For MS, she wanted to share her story for others who may be going through a similar situation. She says particularly for people in her community where there is a stigma around mental health.

"I think there is still a lot of misinformation and a lack of knowledge," she said. "I felt pressure to keep quiet and people didn't want me to talk about my struggles. I felt I was judged if I told people I was unwell. But I want people to know it's fine to have an illness and you are normal. Everyone has their own story."

**initials used to protect identity*



New 24-hour mental health helpline for residents of Sunderland and South Tyneside

Local charity Mental Health Matters (MHM) have successfully launched a new mental health helpline to support residents of Sunderland and South Tyneside.

The helpline, staffed by a team of highly skilled and compassionate Support Workers, offers free 24/7 emotional support to residents aged 18 and over.

The team also provide advice, guidance, and signposting to other local services that can offer additional support.

Individuals who aren't comfortable phoning the helpline can also access support from a confidential 24/7 web chat service, available via Mental Health Matters' website.

This new helpline provided by Mental Health Matters will complement and support our Crisis Team. By working together, we can ensure that people in Sunderland and South Tyneside who are in distress receive the best possible care and support, when they need it most."

Jane Hughes, CEO of MHM, said: "We are excited to expand our helpline service to support the communities of Sunderland and South Tyneside. Having someone to talk to when you are struggling can be hugely beneficial and our specialist team is ready to listen and provide non-judgemental support any time, day or night".

Mental Health Matters' helpline supported over 75,000 calls last year and is proud to be accredited by the Helplines Standard, which recognises best practice in helpline work. Residents can access support by calling 0800 138 6543.



May is National Walking Month

May is National Walking Month. Walking is proven to be good for our minds, our bodies and the environment. That's why we're encouraging everyone to pledge to walk more this May! As always, this also includes people who use wheelchairs or other mobility aids.

Living Streets is encouraging people to #Try20 and walk for 20 minutes each day during May.

Walking is an easy and accessible way to improve mental and physical health and a 20-minute walk can reduce the risk of a number of preventable health conditions, including certain cancers, depression, heart disease and Type 2 diabetes.

By swapping a short drive for a short walk, you can also help the environment and get active in the process.

Adding a walk to your daily routine can lead to:

- Fewer symptoms of depression
- Reduced feelings of anxiety
- Improved cognitive function
- Improved quality of life
- Improved sleep quality
- Reduced risk of dementia

Find more tips from Living Streets on how to make the most of your walks [here](#).

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

North Tyneside and Northumberland Adults - 0800 652 2861 Children and young people - 0800 652 2861 Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07887 625 277	North Cumbria Adults - 0800 652 2865 Children and young people - 0800 652 2865 Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07789 565 6226
Newcastle and Gateshead Adults - 0800 652 2863 Children and young people - 0800 652 2864 Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07839 229 348	Sunderland and South Tyneside Adults - 0800 652 2867 Children and young people - 0800 652 2868 Text number for people who are Deaf and/or have communication difficulties - 07889 506 390

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 and leave us your details and we will be in touch.

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