

Annual Report October 2024

Including data from the 2023/2024 year



MENTAL HEALTH
FORUM

The service user and carer voice of lived experience in developing mental health services, and in supporting individual and community awareness, wellbeing and resilience across Southern Trust area

Charity Information

Established in August 1993

Current Management Committee

Chairperson: Teresa Nugent
Treasurer: Margaret McGuire
Secretary: Caroline Ferguson
Trustee: RoseMarie McDonnell
Trustee: Laurence Bradley

Forum Manager Karl Hughes
lobby@mentalhealthforum.co.uk

Development Officer Elaine Fogarty
elainefogarty42@gmail.com

Address & Contact Points

The Mental Health Forum, Ballybot House, 28 Corn Market, Newry, BT35 8BG

Office telephone number: 028 3025 2423

Website: www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk

Facebook: @serviceuservice

Registrations and Affiliations

Charity Commission Northern Ireland:	NIC104166
HMRC Charity Reference:	XR28528
Information Commissioners Office:	ZA125814
Zero Suicide Alliance:	Member
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action:	Member
Confederation of Community Groups:	Affiliate
Institute of Leadership & Management:	Staff Membership
British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy:	Counsellor Accreditation

Advice and Support Services

Banking: Allied Irish Bank
42-44 Hill Street, Newry, BT34 1AU

Payroll: Confederation of Community Groups
Ballybot House, 28 Corn Market, Newry, BT35 8BG

Insurance: Autoline Direct Insurance Consultants Ltd
2 Ashtree Enterprise Park, Rathriland Rd, Newry, BT34 1BY

Independent External Examiner: Marian Shields





Foreword

By *Teresa Nugent*

Chairperson, The Mental Health Forum

2023-24 again proved to be a particularly challenging year for the community and voluntary sector. As ever, investment in that sector fell far short of what was required but again the third sector rose to the challenges presented and continued to deliver much needed services to our communities

The challenges affecting our health and social care system impacted on every sector of society. In spite of this, the Mental Health Forum continued to deliver services ranging from counselling, individual advice, support and signposting right through to training and involvement opportunities for people with lived experience. Our suicide awareness workshops continued with financial support from our local primary care multidisciplinary team. Our engagement with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust involved improving service delivery in both In-patient and community settings, and we continue to work closely with the Department of Health and our local political representatives to address both the immediate and long term challenges facing our communities.

Once again I want to take the opportunity to thank all our Forum staff and volunteers for their continued commitment and dedication to serving the needs of those across our communities struggling with daily mental health challenges and the continuing cost of living pressures. I am proud of the achievements of our staff in the face of evermore challenging conditions, and I hope that the value of our work will be duly acknowledged and recognised by central government in seeking to deliver on the recommendations of the Mental Health Strategy in the year ahead.

Teresa Nugent

Chairperson

Mental Health Forum





Who we are

The Mental Health Forum has been serving the Southern Health & Social Care Trust area of Northern Ireland for 30+ years, and acts as the official voice of the service user community within the internal processes and planning of its Mental Health Division.

The charity was established as a means of communicating authentic mental health service user and carer opinion to service providers, and as a conduit to receive key community information from service providers. Since 1993 We have provided advice, information and signposting for service users, carers, professionals and the general public in relation to mental health services throughout the Trust area. We engage directly with service providers in planning, delivery and monitoring mental health services both locally and regionally, and a large part of that vital independent role is still facilitated by our unique User and Carer Service Improvement Group which was established in 2007.

Over time, our support and tailored capacity building structures have evolved to fulfil our goal of being a truly Peer-Led organisation in every aspect of our work. We have a reputation as leaders in Coproduction Practice and since our earliest days have been passionate champions of person-centred, recovery-focused, trauma-informed, and strengths-based approaches; this all strongly aligns with current government and HSC evidence and strategy.

Our peer-involvement and peer-leadership priorities allow us to communicate and lobby for the interests of service users and carers with authenticity: we are proud to be *The voice of Lived Experience*.



THE MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

- Is the independent voice of everyday service users and carers in the Southern Trust Mental Health Division
- Focuses on an individual's strengths, abilities, and possibilities
- Acts as a pathway for the exchange of mental health information
- Participates equally in Trust workstreams and groups
- Provides access to support and advocacy services
- Promotes the concept of personal recovery and recovery focused care
- Provides opportunities for mutual support and discussion
- Is directly involved in programmes for learning and building resilience
- Works closely with other community and voluntary organisations to plan and improve services locally and regionally

"the Mental Health Forum has supported, encouraged and inspired me"

"Activity with the Forum has boosted my confidence and connected me to the support of my peers"

"It feels great to be part of it"

"We don't just keep up with developments, we're part of them! It's so worthwhile"

"It's nice to be able to contribute, to know your voice gets heard"



Getting involved is good for your mental health

Get in touch today. Service Users & Carers are welcome to join us.

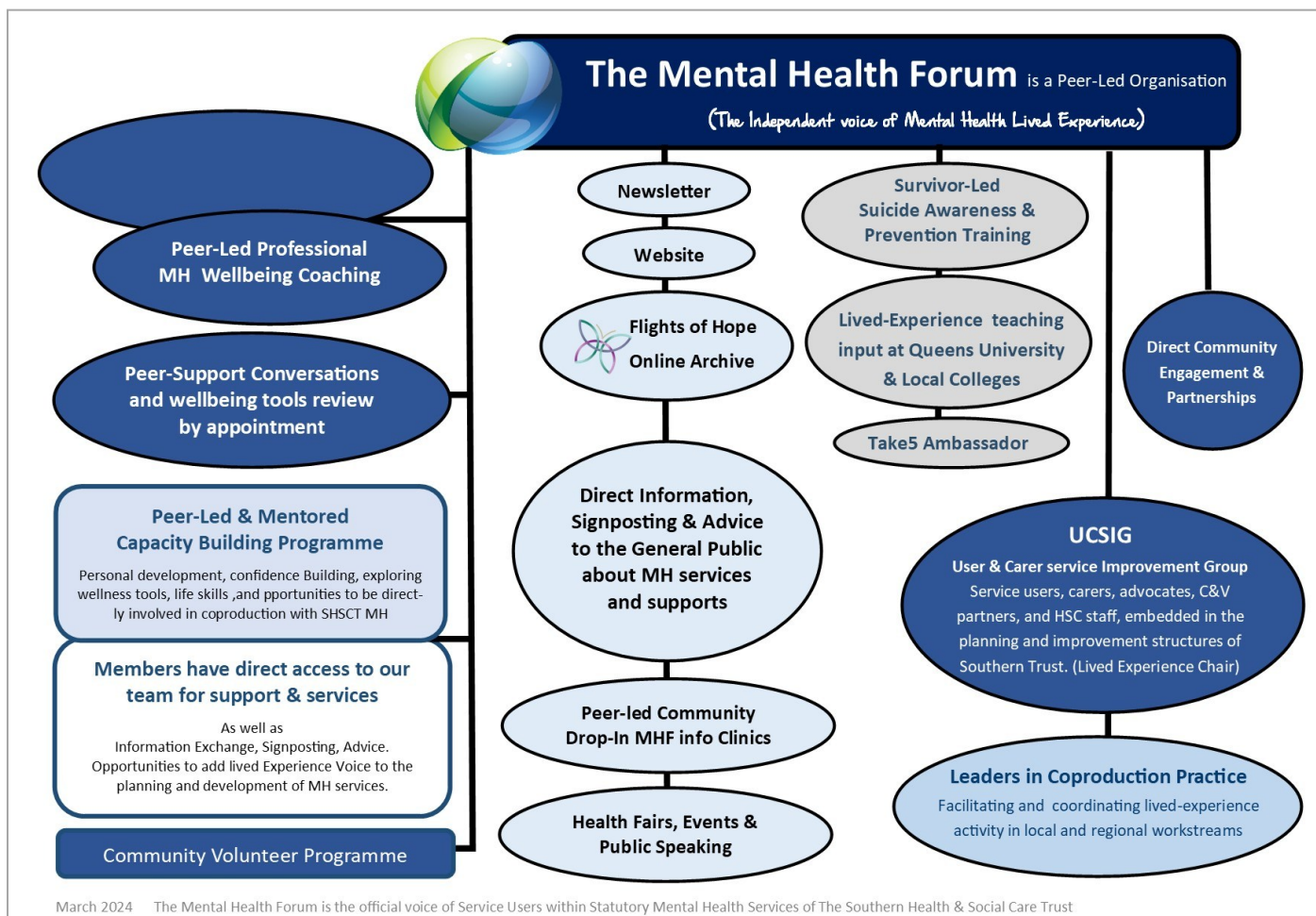
Mon-Fri 9am-5pm | Elaine: elainefogarty42@gmail.com T: 078 7626 1033 | Karl: lobby@mentalhealthforum.co.uk T: 028 3025 2423



MENTAL HEALTH FORUM



What we do



Some of our volunteer Lived Experience Team Members



Pauline Reid
Public Awareness Coordinator.
Editor in 'Flights of Hope' Project



Trudy Beattie
Senior Public Awareness Rep



Kevin Heaney
Senior Peer Trainer and
Facilitator



Eoghan Heron
Digital Platforms Coordinator



Karl Hughes
Manager



Elaine Fogarty
Development Officer



- Accessible by the general public
- Open to Adult MH Service Users or Carers in SHSCT area (past or present)
- Self-referral by General Public (adults) in SHSCT area, but subject to clinical criteria
- Open to Businesses, Groups, Organisations, Services, HSC Teams
- Forum Members

Information, signposting & advice about mental health issues, services and supports.	■ ■ ■ ■
MHF Website Information, Facebook Page, YouTube channel	■ ■ ■ ■
MHF Monthly Newsletter	
Forum Members meeting with peer-mentorship Monthly meeting by Zoom with info exchange, wellness discussion, and learning	■ ■
MHF Capacity Building for service users & carers 18yrs+ Peer-Mentored Programme to build skills and confidence for Involvement & Coproduction and sharing of Lived Experience. (with weekly group zoom sessions and 1:1 sessions via zoom)	■ ■
PeerChat... 18yrs+ Peer-Led Service offering Peer-Support by appointment to any member of the public or service user/carer experiencing low level challenges or worries about their mental wellbeing or coping tool options	→ → ■ ←
Peer-Led Workshops, Talks, Awareness sessions or Info Stands Suicide Awareness, MH & Wellbeing, MH Lived Experience, etc (subject to availability.) (Bespoke workshops can also be created for a small fee)	■ ■ ■ ■
MHF Community Volunteer Programme 16ys+ Opportunities for members of the public to support the varied activity of Mental Health Forum services (with 'office-based' and 'work-from-home' options as available)	■ ■ Placements (work preparedness, experience, university or college, volunteer element of youth programmes)



Throughout the past year the Mental Health Forum continued to develop and grow its engagement with a wide range of community based providers. Building on existing partnerships and evolving new opportunities for co-working continues to provide ever greater reach into our communities and adds strength to the importance and value of our community and voluntary sector.

The following are agencies with whom the Forum has engaged throughout the past year:-

- * Daisy Hill Hospital Future Group and Daisy Hill SOS Group – Political, Business and
- * Civic society working in partnership with the Southern Health and Social Care Trust
- * Wellness Action Partnership across Newry, Mourne, Down and South Armagh
- * CAUSE – Carer Support Service
- * Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action (NICVA)
- * Lifeline
- * Mindwise
- * Action Mental Health
- * Community Advice (Newry, Mourne and Down)
- * Community Foundation
- * Newry Mourne & Down District Council
- * Housing Executive
- * Newry GP Federation / Multi-Disciplinary Team
- * Rural Health Partnership
- * Clanrye Group
- * Southern Regional College
- * Kilkeel Development Association
- * Women's Aid (Newry & Armagh)
- * Newry Enterprise Agency

The Forum will continue to engage with a wide range of agencies across both the C&V and Statutory sectors to ensure the very best outcomes for our clients and our communities.

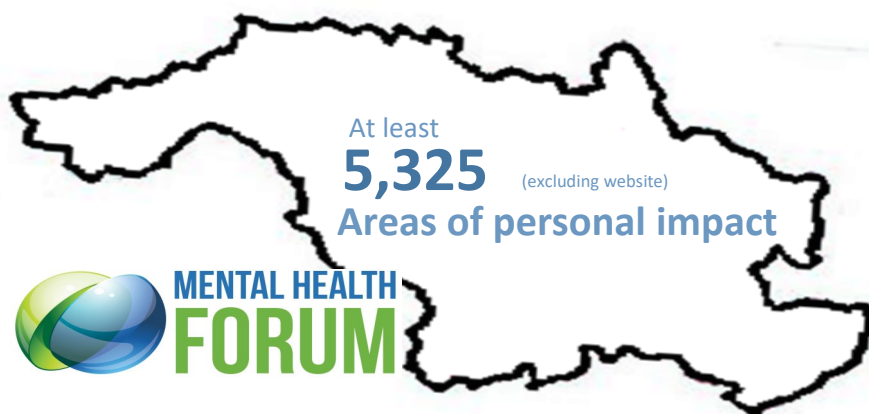
Karl Hughes

Manager
Mental Health Forum



The Impact of our Peer-Led Services (2023/2024 year)

Building on the Forum's 30+yrs of expertise in the field of User-Engagement & Peer-Leadership



At least 426 accessed 'Public Awareness Events & Talks'

intended to provide impact of:
improved mental health knowledge, coping tools, or access to support the community

107 people accessed 'Talk2me...' Peer-led Professional Counselling

intended to provide impact of:
decreased mental distress in relation to presented personal issue, and improved self awareness, self-care skills & resilience.

959 sessions provided
across face to face, zoom, and walk 'n' talk

13 people accessed 'PeerChat' Peer-Support by appointment

intended to provide impact of:
improved self-awareness, coping tools and resilience to better manage personal mental wellbeing. Supported by tailored community signposting.
67 sessions offered

52 people accessed 'Flights of Hope' archive project contribution opportunity

intended to have impact of:
increased resilience, confidence, and capacity for self-care, through sharing part of own personal story with others who may be struggling with their mental wellbeing in some way.

639 booklets of these stories shared
with intended impact of bringing Hope, Inspiration and Encouragement.

3 people providing 'Teaching input with QUB & SWC'

reporting improved personal mental health through the sharing of lived experience on topic of mental health & wellbeing with students of HSC related courses

46 Future Professionals learning about effective client approaches and benefit of Recovery-focused practice.

861 people accessed 'Peer-Staff signposting/advice'

intended to provide impact of: being better informed or connected directly with appropriate mental health support or services

At least 3729 accessed Newsletter / visited Facebook for information & at least 32,650 visits recorded on the Forum Website

intended to provide impact of:
improved mental health knowledge, connection or learning opportunities, coping tools, or access to advice, advocacy, or support & services in the community.

31 people accessed The Forum's mentored 'Capacity Building Programme' Pathway

intended to provide impact of:
improved opportunities, skills, knowledge and confidence in coproduction practice, while simultaneously being exposed to opportunities and tools for personal development.
26 1:1 mentorship sessions & 41 Group sessions offered

28 people accessed 'Take5 Ambassador' info sessions

intended to provide impact of:
improved self-awareness and ability to better self-manage personal wellbeing using the public health model of 'Take5'

At least 26 People engaged in supported

'Coproduction in SHSCT MH Services'
intended to provide personal impact of:
improved personal sense of contribution, confidence, and mental wellbeing from directly sharing lived experience & expertise.

14 people accessed representation role at User & Carer Service Improvement Group

intended to provide:
direct coproduction opportunities, strengthened personal mental health and sense of contribution through mentored and supported lived-experience contribution.
This is unique regionally, and is embedded in SHSCT MH Division's planning and quality improvement of it's services

35 people

Now have increased knowledge, confidence and skills to potentially save lives of those in suicidal crisis,
having attended the
Mental Health Forum's unique
'Survivor-Led Suicide Awareness Training'

All of this supported by at least 763 hours of service user & carer volunteering within MHF 'Community Volunteer Programme' and 'Core CBP Team. With personal wellbeing impact for volunteers, as well as significant community benefit.



Information,
Signposting &
advice to the
General Public
about MH services
and supports

- Helping Individuals find or access supports and services

Our team offers information,
signposting, and advice by
telephone or at our office.

And our Forum service user and carer
members continue to play a leading role
in its outreach into local communities.

Health fairs, events, courses and other
opportunities allowed us to reach people
with mental health and wellbeing info
and to provide tailored signposting.



At least **842** People benefited
from signposting to crisis sup-
port services during their in-
volvement with the Forum in
the 23/24 year.

Get in touch today to
learn about our
**FREE peer-led
Services**

- Suicide awareness workshops
- Community information sessions and focus groups
- Counselling
- Peer-Chat service
- Capacity building programme
- Volunteer programme
- Wellbeing and resilience building discussions

www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk
Newsletter: <http://eepurl.com/gtoah9>
Facebook: @serviceusersvoice
YouTube: Mental Health Forum

Connect now for
Up to date mental health information
Wellbeing & recovery resources & links
Public awareness & suicide prevention
Opportunities to get involved
Helpline & Support contacts
Peer support & information
News about learning opportunities
One stop shop for info & downloads
Forum FNA, News & Resources
Confidence, skills, & capacity building
and much more

Your voice matters
Our website
www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk
will answer many of your questions and you are
welcome to get involved and tell us how
empowering it can be to find your voice.

Website Newsletter

Office: Ballyhol House, Corn Market, Newry, BT36 6BG

**MENTAL HEALTH
FORUM**

Be part of
something

Help Shape &
Improve Mental
Health Services

Get information
and share
experience

Build skills
and
confidence

The voice of lived experience
for service users & carers

Information, Signposting & Opportunities



NEW
Take5 Interactive Resource



1472 Newsletter shares in 23/24
to MHF mailing list members,
with extrapolated additional **4300**
via partnership arrangements with
other agency mailing lists.



Peer-Led Services

Membership of The Mental Health Forum

1:1 access to info, signposting & advice, access to relaxed group discussions on wellness tools, personal development skills, opportunities for involvement.

Referral pathway: Self

(Often with recommendation from Social Prescribers, Key workers, Community MH professionals)

Cost: FREE at point of access

Criteria: 18+, live in SHSCT area, with history of Mental Health Challenges

Open to adults who have accessed any kind of community or statutory support to help manage their general mental wellness or a diagnosed MH condition.



1 Apr 23—31 Mar 24

12 Peer-Led Membership meetings offered

92% Satisfaction Rating for Member meetings
(Average % Attendees returning either 'Good or Excellent' when polled)

MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

Recruiting New Members

Free peer-led Support, Learning & Opportunities for MH Service Users & Carers

- Information, signposting & advice from the MHF team re MH services/supports
- Peer-Led Monthly Zoom Membership Meeting - with discussions on wellbeing and personal development, information sharing, and confidence-building
- Access to 1:1 support conversations
- Opportunities for supported Lived Experience contribution and/or involvement with Southern Trust MH services
- Potential progression into the Forum's structured Capacity Building Programme if interested in becoming more skilled in Coproduction & Sharing Lived Experience
- Potential for involvement in MHF projects or dedicated volunteer roles.

Open to adults who have accessed any kind of community or statutory support to help manage their general mental wellness or a diagnosed MH condition.

Online meetings held 3rd Wednesday of each month 7.00-8.30pm
Help to set up and use ZOOM is available if needed

Join Today
or
to learn more
contact Elaine
078 7626 1033

Mental Health Forum (INC) 1041001 Based at Ballyfad House, 28 Cornmarket, Newry, BT35 8BQ. Office Telephone: 028 3025 2423. www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk

Member Activity in the Capacity Building Programme

Peer-led Involvement Experience & peer-supported learning

Referral pathway: Active Forum members can access this additional learning

Cost: FREE at point of access

Criteria: 18+, live in SHSCT area, and experience as SU/Carer with MH Services



1 Apr 23—31 Mar 24

26 1:1 mentoring sessions offered

41 Group mentoring sessions offered

45 Drop-In mentorship clinics offered

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMME with MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

Building Skills and developing Confidence for people with Lived Experience and Carers

- ✓ Direct your passion and experience into shaping mental health services.
- ✓ Benefit from peer mentoring & support.
- ✓ Choose from a range of involvement opportunities.
- ✓ Make a difference, learn, and grow.
- ✓ Involvement options include Email-Based from home.
- ✓ Open to 18+ in Southern Trust area, who have lived experience of Mental Health services as either carer or service user.

Getting involved is good for your mental health and it can all start with just 2 hours a week!

Chat with Elaine today:
T: 07876 261033
E: elainefogarty42@gmail.com

HSCT Southern Health and Social Care Trust Quality Care - for you, with you

The Mental Health Forum (INC) 1041001 Based at Ballyfad House, 28 Cornmarket, Newry, Co. Down BT35 8BQ. E: info@thementalhealthforum.co.uk



Peer-Led Services

Talk2me...

Peer-Led Professional Counselling Service

Peer-led Peer-delivered Professional Counselling Service

Referral pathway: Self, Primary Care MDT, and Social Prescribers

Cost: FREE at point of access

Criteria: 18+, live in SHSCT area, & low presentations of MH issues/challenges

Open to the public, service users, and carers.



1 Apr 23—31 Mar 24

959

1:1 Counselling sessions offered

overwhelmed? anxious? struggling? low self esteem?

Perhaps our **FREE COUNSELLING SERVICE** could help

- ✓ **FREE** and Open to 18+
- ✓ Person-Centred 1:1 Counselling & Resilience-Building
- ✓ Available Face to face or by zoom/telephone
- ✓ Based in Newry and South Armagh but open to all across the Southern Trust area

To learn more or to self-refer:
T: 07876 261033
E: elainefogarty42@gmail.com

MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

PeerChat...

Peer-Support by appointment

Peer-Led service offering a very flexible range of short term peer-support options with tailored approach and confidentiality.

Referral pathway: Self, Social Prescribers

Cost: FREE at point of access

Criteria: 18+, live in SHSCT area, and living with Mental Health Challenges

Open to the public, service users, and carers.



1 Apr 23—31 Mar 24

26

1:1 Peer Mentorship sessions offered

Tailored Mental Health **MENTAL HEALTH FORUM**
Peer Support
by appointment

Is your mental health worrying you?
Would it help to:

- Talk with someone who 'gets it'
- Learn new ways to manage anxiety
- Explore wellbeing & coping tools
- Request some 'connection calls'
- Complete your 1:1 WRAP
- Find support or connection opportunities in your local area

Ask about our
One-off appointments or Series of 4-6 weekly sessions.
Face to face in Newry or by phone or zoom

Contact us today:
T: 07876 261033
E: elainefogarty42@gmail.com

Free peer delivered service for those over 18 and living in SHSCT area.
Subject to criteria & potential waiting list





What is UCSIG, and why does it matter?

Expression of Interest pathway: Self

Cost: FREE at point of access. Some meeting travel expenses reimbursed.

Criteria: 18+, live in SHSCT area, experience as SU or Carer with MH Services (past or present), willing to engage with support and mentoring in the MHF peer-led Capacity Building Programme., willing to contribute to coproduction activity.

Lived Experience involvement open to both service users, and carers

As part of the Forum's work, one of our service user members chairs UCSIG

This is a partnership structure unique to SHSCT and was established with the Forum when the Trust itself was born back in 2007. There is a public-facing element to Forum activity as with all contracted agencies, however we *also have a unique inwardly-embedded function. UCSIG's independent voice and expertise is part of the collaborative leadership approach that strengthens Southern Trust Mental Health Division. The Forum coordinates and supports UCSIG, and it works best when All staff in the Mental Health Division are familiar with us, and All teams have communication lines open with us.*

UCSIG membership includes: service users, carers, advocates, representatives from contracted community organisations, and Trust staff. Together, we sit at the heart of a regionally unique coproduction model that supports work of the teams, their clients, and new improvement initiatives. We meet monthly, and have a regular interface with the collective leadership team in mental health and we have direct communication lines cross-directorate. As appropriate, to speak to specific topics, we can also call for the attendance of specific staff across all areas and bands within our SHSCT mental health. The agenda discusses and contributes to mental health developments, strategy, and key drivers locally and regionally, and links through its reps to multiple workstreams. We intertwine seamlessly with the core work of the Forum with link with multiple stakeholders to facilitate effective communication exchange and cascade. Coproduction opportunities are created or managed through this joint model and have close liaison with the SHSCT Service User Consultant and feedback loops to SHSCT PPI* structures.

Local Examples of MHF members contributing their Lived Experience

SHSCT UCSIG & Divisional Management and Service User Consultant Interfaces

Contribution to development of SHSCT MH services

SHSCT Working Together Steering Group membership

Newry Wellbeing Action Partnership

Towards Zero Suicide Workstreams

Contribution to and approval of various internal policy, strategy and procedure documents for SHSCT, as well as public-facing resources

Membership of various QI project teams

SHSCT staff access to LE-Led training / direct Q&A

Regional Examples of MHF members contributing their Lived Experience

Southern Protect Life Implementation Group

Workstream activity and contribution towards the goal of a regional MH service.

Department of Health Engagement Events

10,000voice Surveys on multiple topics

Contribution to development of various resources and documents for regional use/learning

Contributions to work of Lifeline

Direct input to student learning spaces in QUB and SWC for their HSC-related courses





Membership Opportunities

Providing opportunities to meet, mix, and get peer support, while also sharing information and tools for wellbeing & growth

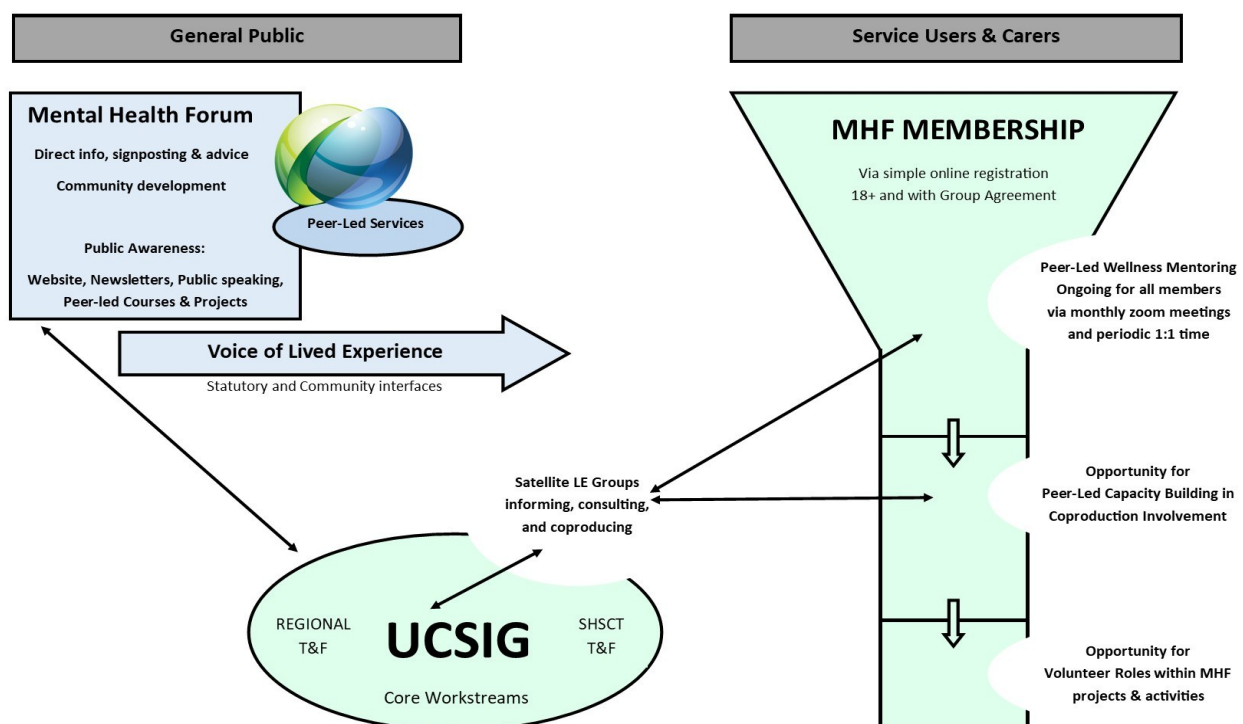
In 2024 a Member coproduction team helped to improve our Membership Structure and benefits. Based on that Lived Experience, and aligning with opportunities and needs of the coproduction landscape in Southern Trust, a new pathway makes joining even easier than before!

Who can Join?

- Any adult living in or accessing services the Southern Trust area
- We welcome MH service users and Carers, and those who have accessed support or care for their mental wellbeing with a GP, accessed talking therapy in the community, or who support their mental health by attending MH support groups.

What are the benefits?

- Information, signposting and advice from the MHF team re MH services/supports
- Regular Newsletters that include information on SHSCT-based wellbeing events or learning
- Peer-Led Monthly Zoom Membership Meeting - with discussions on wellbeing and personal development, information sharing, and confidence-building
- Access to occasional 1:1s support conversations via the regular online zoom 'Support Clinic'
- Opportunities for supported Lived Experience contribution and/or involvement that could help improve Southern Trust MH services
- Potential for progression into the Forum's structured Capacity Building Programme for those who want to become more skilled in Coproduction Practice and Sharing Lived Experience
- Potential for involvement in MHF projects or dedicated volunteer roles.





Feedback from Members

Including those active in coproduction

"The regular zoom meeting gives me a regular space to enjoy. It's where I learn and chat and don't have to feel judged because everyone there understands"

"The video and discussion bits are my favourites."

"Using the website and the newsletter I've found so many things to do and places to go within a reasonable distance from me. Surprised myself by actually signing up for some courses at the Recovery College.. It is SOOO nice to be getting out again after being unwell for a while."

"I'm doing things now that even a year ago I wouldn't have thought I could do."

"Took some time to chat afterwards during private clinic time, and it was good to settle my anxieties about what's happening at the minute.. It was a bonus to get another full-length session to start looking at my 1:1 WRAP :) "

"Lovely bunch of people, [-], and ways to learn and help others..."

"I was nervous to join, but I'm glad I did. I get a lot out of it"

"Yes, I'm using my lived experience, but people don't see me as just that illness. They don't see me as my job title either - I get to just do [-] things as [-]. Everyone should be able to step back like that and get to know themselves a bit better"

"We need to get more people . I wasn't sure in the beginning what I was getting into but it is helping me in lots of different ways."

"Others have shared some good tips over the weeks - there's good support."

"I'm in this now for the long-term.. I like the variety of the consultation and coproduction stuff we do in CBP, and I've gotten involved more deeply now with some roles and projects that are part of the Forum's core work."

"My confidence started to grow not long after joining. Thank you."

"This new-style meeting has so much packed into it and it's usually interesting and fun!"




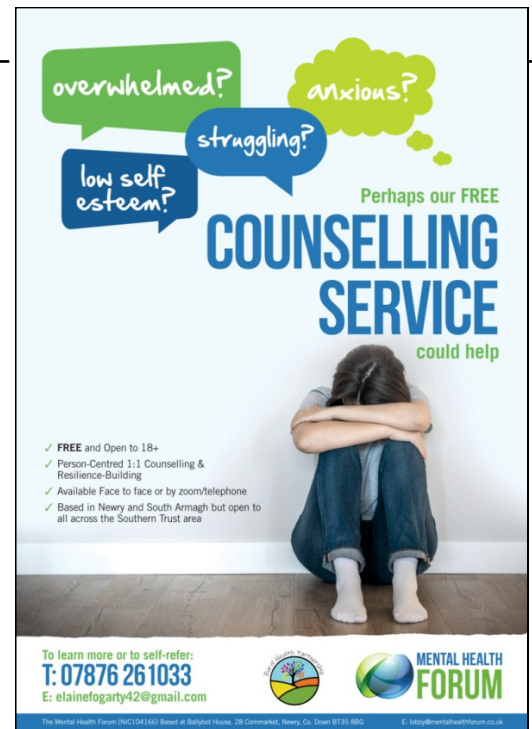
Spotlight on the success on Talk2me...

Our Peer-Led Professional Counselling Service was a response to rising community need and was created and run by a dedicated team that had their own lived experience of dealing with mental health challenges.

It was a community development approach rooted in the value of lived experience, and we were pleased to see it have such positive impact during its run

April 2022 to May 2024.

This had been fully funded by  and **benefited 1676 individuals** in Newry & South Armagh and surrounding areas.



The service is currently suspended pending future investment, and while we continue to explore alternative sources of support it's important to reflect and recognise the impact of this ground-breaking approach to community talking therapy provision.

We are both grateful for and very proud of the hard work and dedication from our Team. This service was conceived and delivered by people who had knowledge and passion, receiving a **100% satisfaction rating** from clients throughout its entire run.

Talk2me... was innovative and responsive in its first run and proved to be a scalable model of effective and accessible intervention aligned with the goals of the 2021-2031 Mental Health Strategy for Northern Ireland. It demonstrated working partnerships and interfaces with local Primary Care MDT teams, Social Prescribers, and local Community Organisations and Services. We hope to have an opportunity to build on this with fresh investment.

“Congratulations to the Team for this achievement, and for the positive change and resilience you helped clients create in their lives during those two years.”

In a Case Study on Talk2me..., created for the DoH, their consultant wrote:

“The approach taken by MHF can be considered a model of good practice in mental health for several reasons, and it offers valuable insights for others to learn from”

It then went on to celebrate Talk2me...’s approach and impact across key areas including:

Integrated approach, Addressing diverse needs, Integrated care, Early intervention, Tailored support, Reducing barriers, Building resilience, Embracing peer-leadership and coproduction, offering support and guidance, and promoting collaboration.



FLIGHTS OF HOPE

Stories of Hope and Inspiration with the Mental Health Forum

in partnership with Southern Protect Life Implementation Group



In 2024 our service user and carers in Project Team continued to promote our online archive of positive hopeful stories and inspiration on our Mental Health Forum website.

(www.thementalhealthforum.co.uk)



We'd like to acknowledge the dedication and hard work of those volunteers and the courage and generosity of the 50+ people who shared their powerful stories, creative works, and insights during this past year!

Another 500 hard copy booklets have been distributed in hardcopy during the past year and the website carries a FREE pdf download version and Audio. This mixed approach has allowed us to share the positive messages of hope, shared experience, and possibility.

We invite people of all backgrounds and treatment pathways to be part of this positive movement by anonymously sharing something helpful and hopeful from their own journey. Contributions come from service users engaged with MH care, GP care, and from people using community treatment or support services to help with their mental wellbeing. We also get contributions from carers and professional or volunteer staff.

Everyone has a story, insight, or example coping strategy ...

Please tell others about the Flights of Hope project, and consider sending us something yourself...

You can submit a short-phrase 'speech bubble' and it can be done anonymously or carry just the person's first name.

Focus is on the ways we choose to manage our every-day mental wellbeing or recovery.

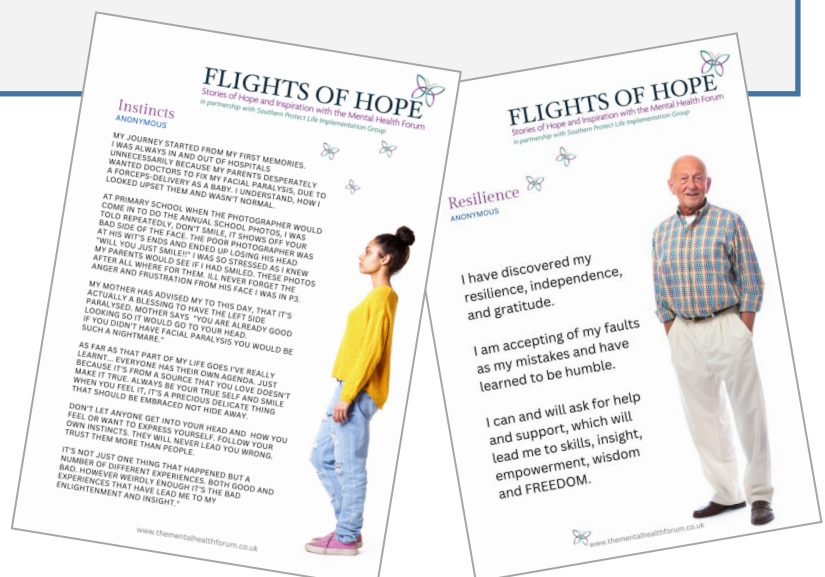


In partnership with Southern Trust Protect Life Implementation Group, the Forum will continue to build this resource.

The Flights of Hope Project Team

New in 2024:

- **1:1 advice or support for potential contributors**
- **Ability to record or edit audio/video contributions**
- **'Expressions' workshop (Discussing Wellbeing tools and strategies, and supporting people who want to express hope in a short story or a poem)**
- **Guidance for organisations or groups who would like to include 'Flights of Hope' in client activity programs or support groups**
- **Our first video story live on the website archive**



Volunteer Programme

Opportunities to contribute and to build skills and confidence

Proudly working with those 16yrs+ from across SHSCT community

Across both our Community Volunteer Programme and the time volunteered to fulfil Specific Capacity Building Programme Roles, we have a group of very dedicated and passionate people. Their skills have supported our digital platforms, public awareness raising, counselling service, office administration, public training course, the Flights of Hope project, resource development, and the capacity building programme itself. Thankyou All.



Information, Signposting & advice to the General Public about MH services and supports

Suicide Awareness Workshops delivered by people who have survived suicidal crisis



In 23/24 our members continued to upskill and seek out opportunities to apply their lived experience to the nuanced area of workshop delivery of suicide awareness in the Southern Trust area.

Our Survivor-Led model is unique and we continue to receive very positive reviews about the impact of having learning spaces created and sustained by people who had actually been in a personal suicidal crisis. The Café– style environment creates a safe and comfortable space for group delivery of the Zero Suicide Training Module* and it's added workshop element.

Our feedback tells us that people's main 'takeaways' are things like:

"The essential skills and confidence are as easy to achieve as the ones for learning CPR or recognising and making safe responses to suspected stroke, using a defibrillator, or knowing what to do if someone was choking - every one can play a role in creating safer communities and the training isn't just for doctors and nurses."

"Talking about suicide doesn't cause it to happen - It's ok to ask."

"Conversations with direct language are usually more effective."

"The 'See, Say, Signpost' steps are easy to remember and apply even if a little nervous"

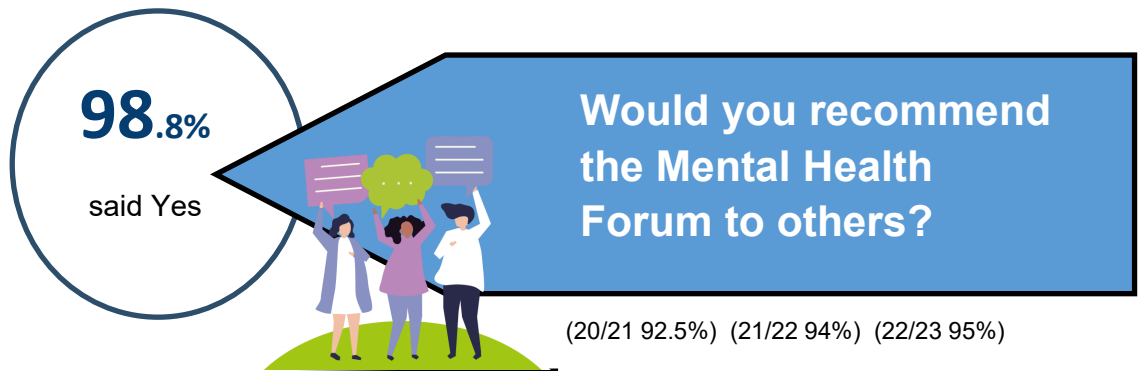
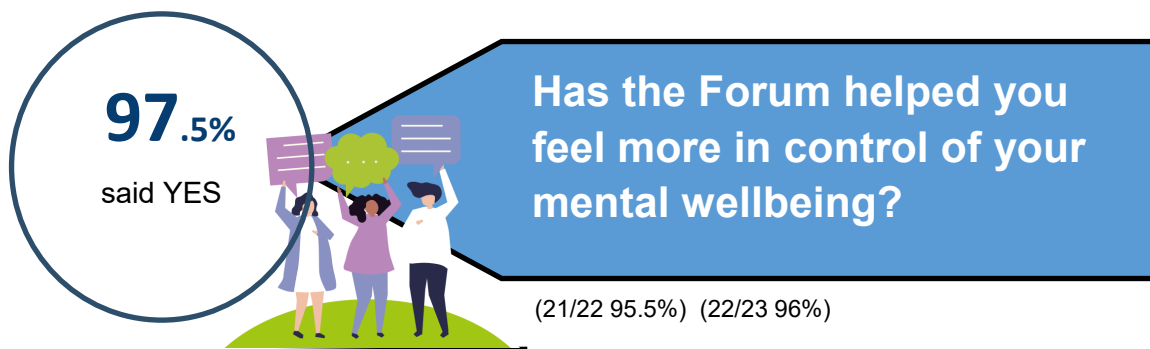
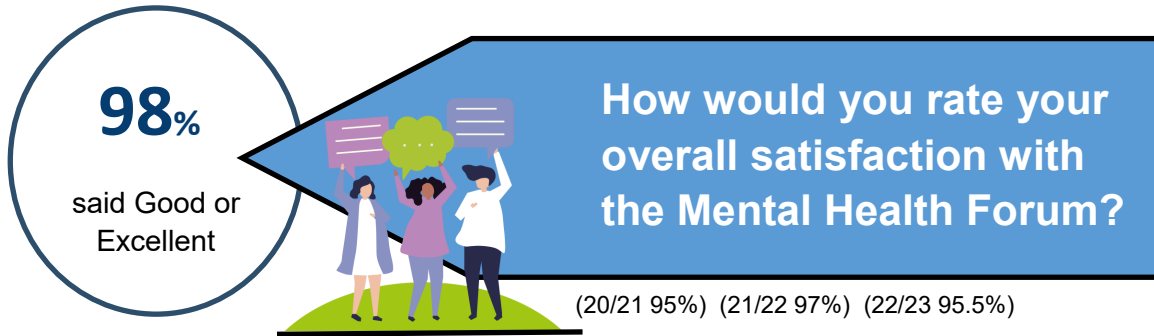
"Being present and providing a compassionate and patient space really helps"

"It's not about having perfect words to say, it's about being authentic and responsive to cues."





How we've made a difference for clients in 23/24





Forum Website Visits during 23/24 year

32,650

Facebook Page Visits during 23/24 year

2,761

Facebook Page Followers as of end 23/24 year) **791**

"I felt encouraged.
Thankyou"

"The girl on the phone was
lovely and got me all the
information I needed to start
getting the situation sorted out"

"I learned so much!! I
feel like I have more
tools now to manage what's
going on in my life."

"I liked how relaxed the event
was and the fact that it felt non-
judgemental and the feeling that
the people in the room cared"

"He knew a lot of stuff. I'd
definitely come back if I needed
more help"

"Thankyou very much for taking
time to speak to our team and fill us
in on what help is available for the
people we are working with. Its
always hard to know where best to
connect them in.""

0

**Number of formal complaints
23/24**

0

**Number of adverse incidents
23/24**

0

**Number of safeguarding
incidents 23/24**



Financial Statement 2023/2024

THE MENTAL HEALTH FORUM

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1ST APRIL 2023 TO 31ST MARCH 2024

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total
Southern Health & Social Care Trust	86714.62	0.00	86,714.62
Community Foundation	13,000.00	0.00	13,000.00
	£99,714.62	£0.00	£99,714.62
<u>PAYMENTS</u>			
Salaries & Inland Revenue	55,827.92	0.00	55,827.92
Bank Charges	189.10	0.00	189.10
Office Rent & Service	3,874.80	0.00	3,874.80
Insurance	925.34	0.00	925.34
Payroll Service	150.00	0.00	150.00
Travel	8,607.10	0.00	8,607.10
Telephone	1,526.42	0.00	1,526.42
Membership & Subscriptions	588.05	0.00	588.05
Equipment	996.82	0.00	996.82
Stationery	1,133.47	0.00	1,133.47
Counselling Service	29,588.62	0.00	29,588.62
Postage	10.42	0.00	10.42
Promotion & Publicity	2,600.00	0.00	2,600.00
Training & Development	1,075.87	0.00	1,075.87
Hospitality	475.19	0.00	475.19
Website/Digital Costs	1,353.60	0.00	1,353.60
Technical Support	150.00	0.00	150.00
Gifts	240.99	0.00	240.99
Water Charges	69.07	0.00	69.07
Management Fee	950.00	0.00	950.00
Expenses	600.00	0.00	600.00
PAT Test	130.79	0.00	130.79
Electricity	157.40	0.00	157.40
Health & Safety	283.41	0.00	283.41
	£111,504.38	£0.00	£111,504.38
Excess of Payments over Receipts	-£11,789.76	£0.00	-£11,789.76
ACCUMULATED FUND			
Balance as at 1st April 2023	18836.59	-879.13	17,957.46
Deficit for the Year	-11789.76	0.00	-11789.76
Balance as at 31st March 2024	£7,046.83	-£879.13	£6,167.70
REPRESENTED BY			
Bank Current Accounts	£7,046.83	-£879.13	£6,167.70

Other than our Bank Account, we have no other Assets or Liabilities

In my opinion, from the records and books I received, the above Financial Statement gives a true and fair view of the state of The Mental Health Forum's financial position for the year ended 31st March, 2024.



Marian Shields

Independent Examiner

27th August 2024



The Mental Health Forum would like to thank our funders



and the local community for supporting our work
with donations, expertise, and volunteer contribution.

MH - Mental Health

SHSCT - Southern Health and Social Care Trust

HSC - Health and Social Care

MDT - Multi-disciplinary teams

QI - Quality Improvement

QUB - Queens University, Belfast

CBP - The Forum's unique peer-led capacity building programme (open to 18+ in SHSCT area who have accessed Trust or Community MH related services)

PPI - Personal & Public Involvement

(The Legal responsibility placed on all SHC Trusts to involve those who use their services in development and quality improvement of those services.)

UCSIG - User and Carer Service Improvement Group. (Facilitated by and integrated into The Mental Health Forum's role. See page 11)

WRAP - Wellness Recovery Action Plan A tool for self-awareness, self-care, and resilience when challenged by either illness or life circumstances

