Future funding for mental health support

Thursday 17 October, 2024

Sellafield Ltd have announced an extension of funding to the West Cumbria Mental Health Partnership (WCMHP), formed to bring a range of mental health and wellbeing providers together and combat the growing rise of mental health issues in West Cumbria.

The WCMHP was established in 2021 as part of Transforming West Cumbria, funded through Sellafield Ltd's Social impact multiplied (SiX) programme and delivered by Cumbria Community Foundation.

Since the programme began three years ago, more than 20 charitable organisations have been funded to provide a range of accessible, community-based support services to prevent mental ill health and improve emotional wellbeing across the region. In that time, more than 5,000 adults and 2,000 children and young people have been supported.

Eirini Etoimou, head of corporate sustainability & supply chain development for Sellafield Ltd, said: "Empowering the West Cumbria Mental Health Partnership (WCMHP) through extended funding is a testament to our commitment to fostering resilience and wellbeing in our communities.

"With the support of Sellafield's Social Impact Multiplied programme, and the dedication of Cumbria Community Foundation (CCF), we are paving the way for innovative mental health initiatives that will uplift lives and strengthen the fabric of West Cumbria."

Tracey West, senior social impact manager at Sellafield said: "The success of the partnership has been driven by the partners working together, reducing duplication and supporting each other when needed. Although 20 organisations have received funding, more than 80 organisations are engaged in the partnership which has helped to achieve the positive outcomes."

The programme is led by Groundwork North East & Cumbria and overseen by a steering group of public, health and third sector representatives.

More than 80 organisations also meet regularly as part of the wider partnership to understand what services are available, how they can refer people into these services, understand gaps in provision and identify barriers to accessing support.

The Partnership has three core activity areas: support to adults, support to children and young people, and to maintain recovery via the Recovery College, led by Together We.

Each partner brings different expertise and services to the partnership. Support offered includes age-appropriate group and individual therapy sessions, drop-in sessions, workshops and courses, as well as advice on issues such as debt and welfare benefits.

Of those supported in the first three years, 61% reported improved mental health or wellbeing, 58% reported increased self-esteem and confidence, and 58% saw a reduction in stress and anxiety.

Philippa Golightly, Project Manager for Groundwork North East & Cumbria, said: "Securing continued funding for the WCMHP marks a significant milestone in our journey to provide essential mental health services to our community. This commitment empowers us to keep making a difference and builds on the success of the last three years, offering hope, support, and care to those who need it most.

"With the vital funding from Sellafield, and the involvement of Cumbria Community Foundation and our partner organisations, we are building a brighter, healthier future."

Annalee Holliday, Head of Grants Practice & Programmes at Cumbria Community Foundation, said: "We know that NHS mental health services in West Cumbria are overstretched, with long waiting lists, so the support which has been made possible by the West Cumbria Mental Health Partnership has been critical to thousands of people in real need over the past three years.

"By working collaboratively, charities with shared aims can increase their impact and effectiveness, amplify their reach and combine resources. It is fantastic news that this work will continue to be funded and we are delighted to play a part in delivering this vital programme."

If you or someone you know needs help with their mental health, please visit www.wcmhp.org.uk/. If you

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are in crisis and need immediate help, please call NHS 111.

Case study

Kelvyn James is an international mountain leader, qualified counsellor and volunteer with the Samaritans.

He founded the social enterprise Mental Health North West which secured £31,320 of funding via the adult partnership to deliver 120 guided walks over three years for people experiencing mental health issues.

Participants are not required to have had a formal diagnosis. They join the walks if they feel it would help them. There is no charge.

Kelvyn said: “It’s a spectrum, from those who are suicidal to people experiencing a bad day. When we take them for a walk, it’s an opportunity to talk.

“We have one chap who says the walks are the only things in his life that he looks forward to. We have a lady who says it’s the only time that she speaks to other people.”

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