

 **Mind Washington**
For the people of Sunderland



WASHINGTON MIND

Annual Report 2024-2025

Washington Mind's mission is to work in partnership with our community to promote recovery and improve mental health and wellbeing.

Our vision is "A society that understands and is active in improving mental health & wellbeing and building the emotional resilience of people of all ages."

‘Hope at a **Local Level**’



CHAIRS INTRODUCTION -



As I reflect on my first year, in my role as Chair of Washington Mind, I do so with a strong sense of pride and gratitude. My journey with Washington Mind has only just begun, but has already been shaped by the extraordinary people who make the support we provide, possible. Whether that's our dedicated staff and volunteers, or the quite simply inspirational leadership that has guided Washington Mind for so many years.

The organisation's unwavering commitment, knowledge, compassion and kindness through which they all deliver our many services, reminds me daily why local mental health support is not just valuable, but essential.

For almost a decade, my work in the NHS and with Space North East has taught me that to support others, we sometimes need to be bold. Bold can be daunting at times, but I have seen firsthand how determination about genuine care, and always questioning why things are done the way they are, can champion in the most effective way, the needs of our communities.

As we move forward into 2026, I thank Jacqui, Kathy & Bernie for their unwavering support and stewardship. Without the staff, volunteers and patrons of Washington none of this would happen. Finally, I am deeply honoured to help lead this organisation into its next chapter alongside such an incredible team.

James Fildes

Yes, that's really us



CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S OVERVIEW:

In this our 44th year of providing mental health support, we are proud to share in this report the measurable and meaningful difference we are making to our local community.

Mind's Big Mental Health Report 2025 demonstrates that the number of people struggling with their mental health is rising fast. This demand warrants a menu of support, because one size does not indeed fit all nor can one service do it all. This report highlights our contribution as a relatively small charity with a big reach. But the breadth of our work is only possible thanks to our incredible team of staff and volunteers with the support of our trustees, partners and funders. Thanks to everyone of you for helping us fight for better mental health for all.

The voluntary sector is competing for funding more than ever and the current cost of living crisis and demand on mental health services continues to outweigh capacity across all sectors. We believe it is a time for change, now more than ever we need to listen and learn from our communities to ensure we deliver support that is right for them. Now is the moment to come together for better mental health.

Planning ahead we remain optimistic, and welcome the opportunities for more collaborative working. We will commit with our partners, to transform how we deliver services, building hope at a local level will be central to our work going forward.

Jacqui Reeves

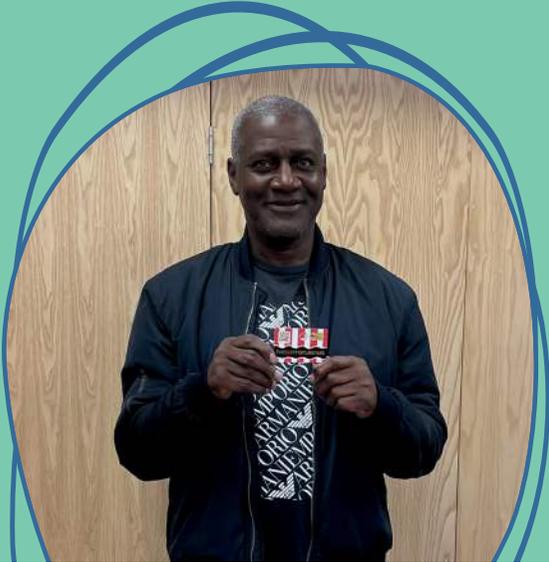
Thank you all -

Once again thank you all - trustees, members, supporters, colleagues, volunteers, campaigners, event participants partners and funders for the incredible difference you are all making.

We simply couldn't do what we do without you.

Patron - Gary Bennett

I am once again proud to be one of the Patrons of Washington Mind, a much-needed source of support for our community. Through my links with SAFC, we appreciate the support the ground-breaking Fans Supporting Fans, Match Day Mental Health Hub, provides for our football community. I am especially pleased to see the football themed card included in the life saving, suicide prevention resources.



Now is the moment to come together for better mental health. Whether you're a campaigner, service provider, policymaker, or simply someone who cares, we hope this report arms you with the insight and evidence to demand better – and to act.

Dr Sarah Hughes, CEO

Patron - Norma Wright

As Patron of Washington Mind I am delighted and honoured to once again be part of the annual celebration of Washington Mind's achievements in this their 44th year. Throughout my statutory, voluntary and political careers I have always maintained a passion for mental health and wellbeing and my involvement with the charity stretches back over most of those four decades.

This remains the case in my retirement, continuing to support the work of Washington Mind.

I cannot praise the trustees, staff and volunteer team highly enough for their passion and their commitment to maintaining support to meet the high demand for our mental health services.



“ Nearly all therapists identified financial pressures and the rising cost of living as major contributing factors, while 83% reported that war and global conflict have also negatively affected people's wellbeing. BACP Mindometer survey 2025 ”



This year we have seen **1,411** new referrals, but in total **5,794** people have received support throughout the year, including accessing therapies, social support, alternative and therapeutic group work and a variety of wellbeing activities, everything from cycling and dog walking to meditation and yoga.

The Life House itself has seen over **32,089** visitors in addition to our delivery in other community venues across the City. Our small team rely on the support of our partners and volunteers to ensure that we can offer a wide range of activities to accommodate this growing need for mental health and wellbeing support for the community.

5,794

People Who Have Received Support Throughout The Year



Washington Mind Unique Visitors:

32,669



wellbeinginfo.org

Wellbeinginfo Unique Visitors:

123,156

822

People Attended Training Courses



1,411

New Referrals



220

220 Online Support Group Members

23,018

Social Support Attendance



32,089

Visitors To The Life House

99,197

Enquiries

31

Active Volunteers

2,342

Crisis Page Visits

8,394

Counselling Appointments

4,445

Getting Help QR Visits

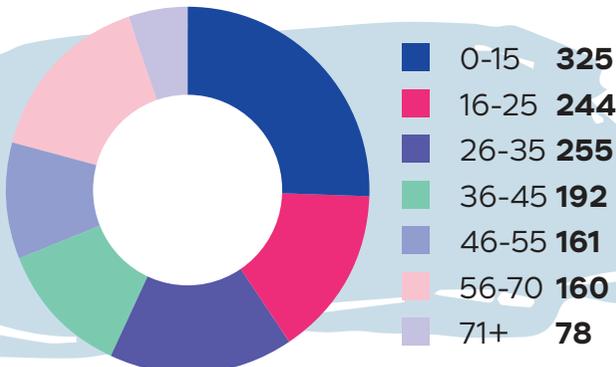
1,551

Listening Ear Appointments

7,290

Young People's Activity Attendees

Age Breakdown:



Business Plan: 2024/25 achievements and plans for 2025/26



Last Year

The Life House continued to thrive, and we welcomed over 32,000 people over the year, offering a wide range of support and activities for our community.

Our wellbeing activities continued to expand and strengthen we launched a new SEND parent and carer group, Chatty Café, Lunch and Learn sessions, and Connections Café, with new funding secured to sustain exercise classes until July 2026. Digital sessions were delivered in partnership with Sunderland Software City and Barclays. Across

the year, additional wellbeing and social opportunities were introduced, such as massage therapies, meditation, a Baby Massage group, and the Men's Pizza Club.

Festive community events were well attended, and the launch of the Young Peoples wellbeing.org site marked a key milestone. Planning took place for new initiatives including the Family Tea Club and the relaunch of the Job Club, alongside recruitment for new staff roles to support future delivery.

This Year

This year we will be looking at our funding streams and working on the sustainability of projects that have helped and supported our community where funding will be coming to an end.

We will also launch more activities for our young people within the school holidays, and we will continue to offer a wide range of services to our whole community.



The Life House is a lifeline for me helping me to cope with difficult periods after major life changes. I appreciate the companionship of all I come in contact with THANK YOU ALL.



Last Year

We revamped our youngpeopleswellbeing.org so that it can keep up with the ever-changing digital world and continue to meet the needs of its visitors. The revamp saw the site content condensed so that young people, their parents/carers and professionals who support them can access information in one place to avoid repetition and replication. The website and its available tools have continued to evolve along with the needs of our community.

This Year

We will expand our content offer on youngpeopleswellbeing.org through the addition of information surrounding self-help while on a mental health waiting list, SEND and educational transitions. We will also create a Family Support page which will provide a central area for families to access key resources and information from ante and post-natal to early years and education and beyond.



'This site is great, thank you so much for all the information. I found it really helpful'



Training at...



For the people of Sunderland

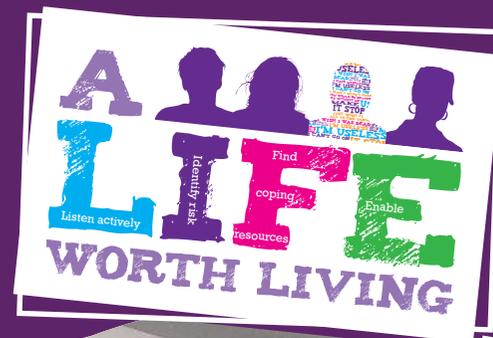
Mental Health Awareness for Managers.

"Washington Mind listened to our organisation's requirements and designed the training to meet our unique needs. The professionalism in both preparation and delivery was second to none."

Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

Washington Mind are renowned for co-producing, developing, and delivering mental health training to meet the bespoke needs of businesses and organisations across our city. Working within mental health services, our trainers have the knowledge and experience that ensures the training we deliver is both practical and supportive in increasing awareness and understanding. As employee wellbeing moves up the agenda investing in your workforce, your people, and taking a proactive approach makes perfect sense.

We have several courses that we already deliver and are currently working with local businesses to create bespoke training that meets their specific business needs. Contact us here for more information and / or to discuss our training programme training@washingtontmind.org.uk



Last Year

During this year a negative focus on mental ill health in the press and voiced by some members of parliament has created a negative view of those among us who are finding life difficult. Our training delivery aimed to challenge the revival of the stigma and often the prejudice associated with poor mental health.

Our training programme increased not only awareness but a deeper understanding of

mental health, poor mental health and mental illness. Experience, expertise and knowledge from working within mental health services has ensured that our training delivery is of a high standard, is current, relevant and meets the needs of businesses, educational settings and community services and organisations across our community. Together we made a difference for so many.

This Year

This year will see a continuation of our work to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding through the delivery of our training programme. We will build on our reputation through our true partnership working and continue to foster and strengthen existing relationships and make new ones. We will support our businesses

and organisations to meet their training needs as they foster a workplace culture that is understanding and proactive in protecting the mental health of their people. New training modules are currently being developed, and these will be launched in the coming year.



For more information about our training go to...

washingtontmind.org.uk/mental-health-and-wellbeing-training/

Building resilience in the workplace.

"The training was a very valuable use of a morning out from work. It reminded me that I can seek to regain control and make small realistic changes to support my own wellbeing at work.

I attended this course to better understand my own attitudes to stress/resilience so that I could assist others further. I am responsible for a team

of agents at work, and this course has alerted me of potential warning signs and how to act with small exercises and ways to approach conversations. This way I can look out for both myself and my colleagues

I am a first line manager. I now feel much better able to look for, notice and act on peoples stresses and deal with this prior to it becoming a real issue."

A LIFE Worth Living suicide prevention and intervention training

"Working in HR, I will apply A LIFE Worth Living training to my role by being there for my colleagues, knowing how to spot signs, signpost and support. I will also be arranging more training next year as I believe

more people want to and should do this course.

I have actually had to use the training the day after the course, and I felt so much more confident and knew who to contact. They have now made contact with a counsellor and have been referred so have made the first steps to getting help."



Last Year

We continued to provide counselling across the City and maintained Service Level Agreements with 6 schools.

Building on our nuanced approach to mental health, we further developed creative opportunities via our Teenage Market and partnership with The Bunker.

Young people's needs and wishes have remained central to our development and delivery, along with an ongoing commitment to ethical practice, and innovation.

This Year

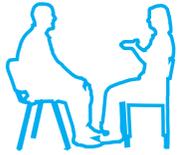
We will remain committed to working collaboratively with young people, in order to be responsive to their needs

We will retain an openness to change and innovation, whilst maintaining high ethical standards.

We will listen to our community and work with them to co-produce services that are effective and efficient.



Just wanted to say thank you for how you've helped over the past few months - we have seen improvements in so many areas'



Adult Counselling Service

Last Year

We actively worked towards our performance targets and successfully kept waiting times to a minimum, even with increasing demand for services. We supported our IAPT partnership by fully implementing the single waiting list through the single point of access, and our use of IAPTus is now fully embedded in routine practice. We completed and submitted our service accreditation renewal, ensuring we maintained our BACP service accreditation.

We restarted our volunteer counselling programme, recruiting three new volunteers. We also continued our collaboration with the BLC, providing support and signposting through the Match Day Hub.

This Year

We will continue to work on our service efficiency by working with our community to reduce cancelled appointments whilst increasing referrals.

We will continue our partnership with the BLC, launching a new 'Fans Space' where Sunderland Fans will have access to a dedicated phoneline/online chat to access support and signposting information.



'As someone who was always afraid to open up about everything going on in my life I was given a safe space to be open and honest and dig deeper into my life. I'm very grateful.'



Friends of...



Washington Mind CIO is a membership organisation, we have over **500** Friends supporting our organisation. If you would like to be a member, subscribe to our newsletter and receive regular information about organisational events and Life House activities and services please contact info@washingtontmind.org.uk or **download** a Washington Mind membership application form from our website www.washingtontmind.org.uk

Membership is free; we welcome new members to support our work and help to shape the future direction of the organisation

www.washingtontmind.org.uk





Washington Mind: Supporting Our Community Through Ray's Corner and Suicide Prevention

At Washington Mind, our message is simple but powerful - no one should face life's challenges alone. Suicide prevention is everyone's business and through initiatives like Ray's Corner, we are working hard to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health and prevent suicide in our communities.

Ray's Corner was established in memory of Ray, a lifelong Sunderland fan who tragically took his own life at the age of 55. Despite being surrounded by family and friends who loved him deeply, Ray didn't feel able to ask for help - a heartbreaking reminder of how stigma can stop people from reaching out. With a donation from his family, Washington Mind created Ray's Corner to honour his memory and help others find the support that Ray couldn't.

Each Ray's Corner acts as a friendly, accessible hub of information - somewhere anyone can find guidance, support, and hope. They've been set up in workplaces and community spaces right across Sunderland, including pubs, taxi offices, hairdressers, and warehouse staff rooms. The idea is to take mental health support to where people already are, especially those who might not otherwise seek help.

Every Ray's Corner includes a QR code

that connects directly to a hub of resources at

<https://wellbeinginfo.org/mhlt/>

where you can find practical self-help tools, crisis contacts, and links to local mental health and wellbeing services. Discreet stickers with the same QR code are also used in public places - like the backs of toilet doors - offering a private, simple way to find support when it's needed most.

If your business or organisation would like to host a Ray's Corner or learn more about the project, please contact Washington Mind.

Over 500 Ray's Corners have now been set up across our community, with over 1,000 QR code stickers set up alongside them. Because of this we've had over 3,000 hits to the linktree associated with the QR code both on the information boards and on the stickers

We sincerely thank Ray's family and friends who for the last five years have continued to fundraise and raise awareness.

Mental Health Match day Hub



Working in partnership with the BLC Supporters Hub back in 2019, Washington Mind launched the Mental Health Match day Hub. The hub takes place before SAFC Saturday home games and experienced staff from Washington Mind, talk to fans and share resources to promote and signpost to information, support and local services.

The hub's work has now expanded and together we have launched our 'Fans Supporting Fans' cards as well as a dedicated Live Chat on Mondays, to enable Sunderland fans to access support.



**Fan Space:
Fans Supporting Fans**

Offered through a partnership between Sunderland BLC and Washington Mind

A space to talk. A space to be heard.
A space to be supported.

**Live Chat
Mondays 12-1pm**

Fan Space is...

- For Sunderland AFC Fans aged 18 and over
- A conversation with a mental health professional via our Live Chat
- A space for you to be heard & supported
- Information about where you can go for additional support

Fan Space is not...
A crisis service or counselling

Fundraising

with  Washington



To buy from our shop go to...
www.washingtonmind.org.uk/shop/

To donate to us go to...
www.washingtonmind.org.uk/donate/

To view our fundraising A-Z go to...
www.washingtonmind.org.uk/a-z/

Scan here to download our fundraising pack...



Fundraising for Washington Mind

Washington Mind is a local independent charity and we're incredibly grateful to all individuals and companies who choose to fundraise on our behalf, we really appreciate your support. If you would like to fundraise for us, check out our website link for some ideas or scan here to download our fundraising pack.

Raising Awareness

We really do appreciate the individuals and organisations who have supported our mental health and suicide prevention campaigns. Thankyou for sharing our information resources, coasters, cards and wristbands. Our Rays Corner is now in over 700 venues across the City and over 4000 people have scanned the QR code – get in touch if you want to be involved.

To find out more about Fundrasing with us go to...
www.washingtonmind.org.uk/fundraising/



Finance

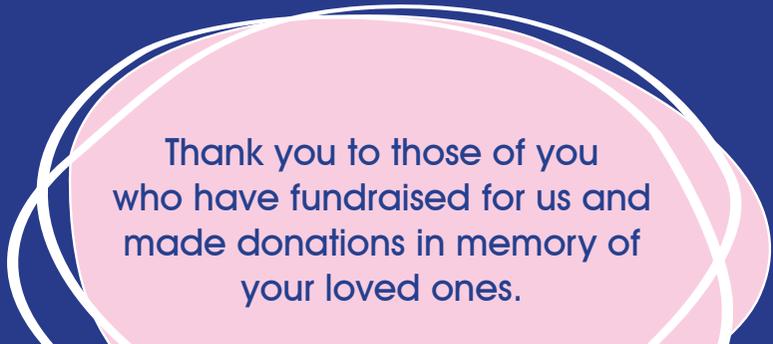


As ever, we want to thank all of our partners who continue to support our charity through commissioning services and training, providing grants, fundraising and working in partnership with us. Without you our charity would not be able to thrive in what continue to be particularly challenging times.

This year's report reflects our continuing achievements during the financial year ending 31 March 2025. Charities play a vital role in our communities, providing essential services and resources that might otherwise go unmet. To enable us to deliver the support needed in our community we continue to explore all avenues of funding collaboration and investment.

We recognise that our people are our biggest resource. We are committed to being a living wage employer. We do however acknowledge that the increase in National Insurance and the continuing cost of living crisis put significant strain on the finances of the charity and our staff team.

David Wright, Treasurer



Thank you to those of you who have fundraised for us and made donations in memory of your loved ones.

Washington Mind has successfully achieved quality standards including the robust Mind Quality Mark, BACP accreditation, CPD Standards Office and Mindful Employer. These continual processes highlight many areas of innovation and assures the people using our services that we offer high quality, best practice and legal compliance in all areas of our organisation's governance, operational, financial, activities and support programmes.



MANY THANKS TO ALL OF YOU WHO HAVE SUPPORTED WASHINGTON MIND. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SHARING OUR FUTURE PLANS WITH YOU...

Call: 0191 417 8043

Email: info@washingtonmind.org.uk

Web: www.washingtonmind.org.uk



The Life House
Grasmere Terrace
Columbia
Washington
NE38 7LP

Connect with us on social media...



-  /washingtonmind
-  /washington-mind
-  /washington_mind



-  /YPWashMind
-  /YPWashMind



-  /wbi.org



-  cafelife_
-  /cafelifecommunity/

To view our year in pictures go to: www.washingtonmind.org.uk/annual-reports/

