

*tyneside women's health*

**Service  
User  
Handbook**

## **1. Introduction to Tyneside Women's Health**

Welcome to Tyneside Women's Health (TWH), we hope that our services will be of great benefit to you on your road to recovery and emotional wellbeing. TWH has been in existence since 1985 and is a women only organisation.

Our vision is for all women in Tyneside to flourish by having access to the right mental health and wellbeing support at the right time and place

Enabling women to reach personal potential by improving mental health and emotional wellbeing

Values:

- Women-led
- Recovery focused
- Active involvement
- Respect for all
- Working in partnership
- Promoting equality
- Meeting women's diverse needs

We have two Centres, one in Gateshead and one in Newcastle, which you can access. We have lots of different groups, courses and activities on offer. To keep up to date with new things, please look on the notice boards in the reception areas and on our website, or you can 'Like' us on Facebook.

## **2. Open Access Services**

Some of our services are Open Access, which means there is no waiting list and anyone can attend, but you will need to reserve a place for some of these services

Open Access Services are usually activity based and offer a therapeutic and social benefit, they are not support groups and facilitators usually can't spend lots of time with one person. **If you wish to talk to a facilitator on a one to one basis please make an appointment at reception.**

Open Access Services do change, so keep a look out for the new timetables. The following are our current Open Access Services:

### **Gateshead Drop In & Newcastle Drop In -**

Informal sessions providing weekly support. A worker is present to provide support during difficult times in the sessions. The drop-ins are a great way to keep in touch with other service users for mutual support and understanding.

**Evening Drop In –** We offer an evening drop in at our Gateshead Centre every Tuesday from 4.30pm until 6pm when women can call in or we can offer welcome session/assessment appointments to those that work during the week.

**Support for women from Black, Asian & Minority Ethnic Communities** is available on a one to one basis. We can also signpost to other more specialised services in the local area.

**Make, Do & Share** - A weekly group where women can share skills with other women by running a creative and therapeutic session such as card making or painting. Any ideas are welcome and support is provided.

**Sunday Lunch Group** - A fortnightly group where women come together to prepare and eat a meal when they might otherwise be alone.

**The Book Group** - Held the last Tuesday of each month and provides a safe space for women to share their experiences of reading. This group is delivered in partnership with Gateshead Library.

**Creative Activities** – We offer weekly crafts sessions as well as other creative activities on an ad hoc basis such as watercolour or jewellery making.

**Positive Notes** - A weekly session of uplifting singing in a group offered by a professional singing teacher.

**Physical Activity** – We offer weekly groups aimed to get you moving.

**Linked Women** – This is a group made up of service users, staff and Trustees, all working together to make improvements to our services. The group meets every six weeks and is also involved in fundraising events and organising social activities for the benefit of other service users.

### **What's on offer for Lesbian and Bisexual women?**

Here at TWH we are working to meet the needs of Lesbian and Bisexual women. If you would like to receive info about any up and coming activities for Lesbian and Bisexual women do let us know – you can email

enquiries@tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk, call us on 477 7898. Keep an eye out for posters too!

### **3. Targeted Support**

Some of our other services have waiting lists such as support groups and courses. If you want to attend a group or course please contact reception or a facilitator at any point and they will add your name to the waiting list. For the courses you will usually get a letter to let you know when it starts and how to enrol. Before you join a support group

you will usually be invited to meet with the facilitator to make sure the group will meet your needs. Our current targeted support services include:

**Safer Women Newcastle, North Tyneside & Gateshead** – these are weekly support groups for women affected by domestic abuse. Support is provided for 6 months for women who want to move on with their lives.

**Wellbeing for Older Women** – a weekly group for women over 55 to provide peer support and reduce isolation.

**Counselling** – we offer a low cost, one to one counselling service. We will ask you how much you feel you can pay for the service. No one will be refused counselling because of their financial situation. Depending on the issues you bring, we may refer you elsewhere for specialist support. To access counselling please speak to a member of staff.

We also offer the following 10 week courses:

**Positive about Me** - to increase confidence and improve self-esteem

**Coping With Depression** - aimed at helping women to identify a variety of coping strategies

that can be used to reduce symptoms and move towards recovery.

**Better out than in!** – to help women develop assertiveness and communication skills, and manage anger

**Ways to Wellbeing** – enabling women to learn ways to manage their emotional wellbeing

**Mood, Food & Me** - to help women identify foods which enhance emotional wellbeing.

**Anxiety Management** - to help women understand their symptoms, identify coping strategies and learn about relaxation/meditation.

**Undoing the Damage of Domestic Abuse** - A 6 week course to help women who have been victims of domestic abuse. Emphasis is on making positive changes to rebuild their mental health and develop confidence in future healthy relationships

**Additional support:** If you require occasional one to one support with a facilitator, this can be arranged outside the session time.

**Peer Support** - Once you have completed groups and courses with us, if you still need some light touch mental health support, we have monthly peer support networks available that are run by women for women.

**1:1 Support** – We understand at TWH that our women sometimes need additional support. At those times we are happy to offer a short 1:1 appointment in order to try and help.

You can also get involved by leading creative activities, helping to organise fundraising events, and by helping in our Women's Wellbeing Café.

For more information about how to get involved and for details of the training available in relation to these roles, please ask a member of staff.

## **5. Safeguarding**

If you are being hurt, bullied or abused by someone, or you have concerns about someone else who may be being abused, please come and speak to a member of staff.

We will help you to decide what to do, which may involve contacting other organisations for support.

You should also take care when exchanging telephone numbers with other service users or using social media. You should only do this when you feel it is safe and should take steps to protect your personal information and boundaries.

## 6. Ground Rules

Why do we need Ground Rules?

- To ensure that Tyneside Women's Health feels safe and welcoming for everyone including service users, staff, volunteers and visitors. Each item in the ground rules applies to the way you communicate with other service users, staff, volunteers and visitors.
- To ensure that everyone is treated with respect and in accordance with Tyneside Women's Health Policies & Procedures, Vision, Aims & Values.
- To ensure that Tyneside Women's Health follows best practice, in line with the standards expected from all mental health *services*.

### **Timekeeping**

When women arrive late for groups it can cause disruption. You should aim to arrive just before the start of the session.

However we do understand that you may have unavoidable commitments elsewhere and may wish to arrive late. It has been agreed that women may arrive within the first half of the session if this has been pre-arranged with the group facilitator. If you arrive later than this you might not be able to join in the session.

### **Professional Boundaries**

To keep you and our staff safe, we have to be clear that the relationship between staff and service users is professional. This means that staff won't say hello to you outside of Tyneside Women's Health unless you say hello first. Staff won't socialise with you, accept friend requests through social media, or tell you personal things about themselves.



## **Confidentiality**

What is discussed in the group stays in the group. Discussion outside of the group can only take place by a prior arrangement, with a professional, and without disclosing the identity of the woman or women involved. This includes the use of social media.

Staff at Tyneside Women's Health will only breach confidentiality if there is reason to believe that there is an imminent risk of serious harm to the woman concerned or others. Where possible, this would always be discussed with the woman first. Other circumstances where we may need to breach confidentiality include suspicion of drug trafficking.

## **Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are to remain switched off or on silent unless women have made an alternative arrangement with a facilitator.



## **Drugs and Alcohol**

If a service user arrives at the centre and is heavily under the influence of drugs or alcohol, staff members will respectfully invite her to come back on another day when she will be more able to participate.

## **Using Social Media**

We encourage service users to engage with us using Facebook, Twitter and other forms of social media. When doing so we expect you to NOT make negative or defamatory remarks about Tyneside Women's Health. If you have a complaint or issue you wish to raise, please do this by using our Compliments & Complaints Policy. Where we see negative comments on social media, we may need to block you from our sites and this may also mean we ask you to leave our services.

## **Verbal Communication**

What we say to each other can have a huge impact on our sense of wellbeing so the service users at Tyneside Women's Health have agreed the following ground rules about verbal communication:

- Swearing – effort should be made to avoid swearing as this can cause discomfort and anxiety for some women; e.g. a woman may have been the victim of abuse that involved swearing.
- Respectful communication – e.g. a raised voice/threatening remarks/patronising tone is unacceptable.
- Respect for individual differences – avoid personal remarks /references e.g. the way someone speaks, dresses or looks (including weight)
- Responsibility for self – e.g. no borrowing of items such as cigarettes or money.
- No buying and selling – this is not legal within Tyneside Women's Health.
- Allow other women the opportunity to speak – e.g. some women may not have as much confidence as others.

## **Non-verbal Communication**

Body language, facial expressions and physical expressions are extremely important aspects of our interaction with others. Tyneside Women's Health service users agree that that non-verbal communication should show respect and acceptance. Some examples of negative, unacceptable behaviour are listed below:

- Hostile staring
- Clenched fists/pointing or leaning aggressively towards someone
- Gestures such as eye rolling or negative facial expressions showing disrespect
- Attack against a person or property
- Theft
- Touching/invasions of personal space unless permission given e.g. hugs

## **Conflict between Individuals**

Disagreements sometimes happen. On most occasions it is possible to respectfully disagree with someone else. If conflict is causing distress to those involved or any other women, staff will attempt to mediate and move to a quiet spot with the women involved, away from the group. If you feel that conflict cannot be resolved and decide not to attend a particular activity that is your right.

**Depending on the group or course you are part of there may be other things you need to be aware of, but the facilitator will be able to tell you more about these. If Ground Rules are not followed we may need to meet with you to discuss this and sometimes we may have to ask you to temporarily leave our service if your behaviour puts other women in danger.**

## 7. Health & Safety Information

There are toilet and hand washing facilities available at our Centres.

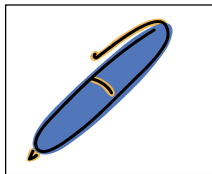


### **Signing in & out**

It is important that we know who is in our buildings if there is an emergency. For this reason, we will ask you to sign in at reception when you arrive and sign out when you leave.

Your Facilitator will also take a register in the room.

To avoid congestion in the reception areas, we ask that you arrive no earlier than 5 minutes before your group or course usually starts.



### **Accident or illness**

If you have an accident or fall ill at Tyneside Women's Health, tell your Facilitator as soon as possible. Your Facilitator will ensure you receive basic first aid or will call an ambulance if you are seriously ill or injured. Your facilitator will have access to your records at Tyneside Women's Health, and if necessary she will get in touch with your emergency contact to let them know.



## Fire Safety Procedures

If there is a fire in the building, an alarm will sound and usually the building will be evacuated immediately.

- You should leave the building by the nearest fire exit
- You should meet at the assembly point outside on the pavement opposite the building
- Your Facilitator will make sure that everyone leaves the building; she will also assist any service users who have disabilities to leave the building
- Your Facilitator will also take the attendance register and will carry out a roll call at the assembly point to make sure everyone is accounted for
- A member of staff will call the fire brigade



There is a **no smoking** policy inside Tyneside Women's Health premises. This includes the use of artificial or e-cigarettes. You can smoke outside of the buildings.



## **Room Safety**

We cannot allow Service Users access to our rooms without a member of staff being present.

Refreshments are provided in exchange for a 50p donation

Facilitators will usually set up rooms before groups and clear tables and chairs away so do not worry about helping to lift furniture. All that we ask is that you have put any rubbish in the bins.

There are usually facilities to make hot drinks, and we have access to cold running water for cool drinks. Please take care when using urns to pour hot water.



## **References**

We are unable to provide formal references or support letters for service users, but we can provide factual information about your attendance and participation using our standard template to help you progress into new things. You should always ask us first before supplying TWH contact details to an external organisation.

## **8. Your Timetable**

The things that you have chosen to attend at the moment are listed on your personal support plan/ timetable. We have also provided you with a copy of our current 'Open Access' timetables for each Centre so you can attend them whenever you wish, but remember to book ahead where necessary. Your name will also be added to waiting lists for the relevant groups or courses that you want to come to. As soon as we have spaces on these things, we will get in touch with you.

## **9. Your Feedback**

Feedback from our service users is very important to us, whether this is positive or negative as it helps us to improve. If you wish to make a comment or complaint about a specific group, you should speak to the facilitator in the first instance. If you feel you cannot do this, you should ask to speak to a manager. To make a general complaint about our services or an individual staff member you can do this verbally, or in writing to a manager.

Linked Women is our Service User Group, there are feedback boxes available to leave suggestions about improvements to services or ideas you might have. Linked Women members will collect these and provide the feedback to the group which is made up of service users, staff and Trustees.

When giving any feedback it is helpful if you can leave your name so that we can respond directly to you. When feedback is anonymous we will often display responses in the Centres.

## **10. Useful Contact Information**

Crisis Team - 0191 275 4949

NHS Direct – 0845 4647

[www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk](http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk)

Samaritans – 0845 909090

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

NTW have a range of guides available for download at

<http://www.ntw.nhs.uk/pic/selfhelp>

Mental Health Matters

0191 516 3500

[www.mentalhealthmatters.com](http://www.mentalhealthmatters.com)

Newcastle Psychological services website has info about mental health conditions, including stress, anger, low mood plus info on courses they do including anxiety and depression.

<http://www.newcastlehealthyminds.nhs.uk/>

For details of recommended

books, trusted websites, self help guides, as well as a more detailed overview of the health and wellbeing services that Newcastle Libraries offer,


please go to: [www.newcastle.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/healthandwellbeing)

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## **My Timetable**

Here are listed the activities I am going to attend and the groups or courses where my name has been added to the waiting list.

Open Access Timetable		
Monday		
Tuesday		
Wednesday		
Thursday		
Friday		

Waiting Lists 

Other Goals:

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## Keeping up to Date

Tyneside Women's Health regularly updates timetables and introduces new activities. To keep up to date with what is going on you can:

Visit our website:

[www.tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk](http://www.tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk)

Like us on Facebook:



Follow us on Twitter:

@TynesideWH



Telephone us:

Gateshead Centre: 0191 477 7898

Newcastle Centre: 0191 265 4692 (part time)

Email us:

[enquiries@tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@tynesidewomenshealth.org.uk)

Call in or write to us:

Gateshead & Head Office 30 Half Moon Lane Gateshead NE8 2AN	Newcastle Office (Part time) Corner of Claypath Street / Wilfred Street Byker Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1JQ
<b>There are notice boards at each Centre where we also display posters and schedules</b>	

The most up to date version of this handbook will always be on our website. We will put notices in our Centres and on our website to notify women of changes.

