

## Aims

Newcastle Clubhouse offers activities and employment opportunities to residents within the city with enduring mental health problems. The project delivers a work-ordered day on site, provides a Transitional Employment Programme (TEP) in the community and has developed a Social Firm.

## Location

The 2001 Census population figure for Newcastle-upon-Tyne was 259,500. The project operates on a citywide basis and anyone with enduring mental health problems who is over the age of 18 can access the project. People can come to the project via a variety of routes, including self-referrals.

## The Intervention Strategy

### Staffing

The work-ordered day is based on the service users taking an active part in the running of the Clubhouse and taking on tasks, such as catering, administration, standards monitoring, house maintenance and publicity. The Clubhouse would not run without the work of the project users.

### Funding

Jointly funded research undertaken in 1999, led to a report entitled "Is there Anything Out there?" This work highlighted that mental health day services were being delivered in an ad-hoc fashion. On top of this, there were evident gaps in that mainstream employment services were being delivered but there was a lack of opportunities at an intermediary level. Additionally, mental health also featured highly as one of the key areas for action within the NHS Plan.

In light of this context, Mental Health Concern raised the issue of current mental health service provision and the potential of a Clubhouse to plug this gap. At the same time, Newcastle Primary Care Trust communicated the availability of NRF monies and was supportive of an application being submitted and they were referred to the Health Partnership.

The project has also been in receipt of other funding sources, such as joint funding from the Local Authority, NDC monies for the Social Firm and De Paul Trust monies (DTI) to support the ICT suite. The 92,000 NRF received made a significant financial revenue contribution and attracted an impressive amount of leverage.

## Operating Method

The TEP scheme focuses on securing entry-level jobs with local employers. These positions are "owned" by the Clubhouse and shared by Clubhouse members on a part-time basis to provide work experience and to avoid affecting statutory benefits. Members of the Clubhouse have set up a social firm in the form of a limited company, which is owned by the members and provides support and guidance to any member with a business idea. Indeed some members have moved into open employment as a result of the renewed confidence and experience gained through participation in the Clubhouse.

The venue provides information, support and guidance to both service users and professionals and makes referrals to other day services. The project seeks to co-ordinate activity, which had previously taken place in isolation and aims to provide information about day activities and other mental health services to users, carers and professionals.

## Achievements of the Intervention

### Main Achievements

Newcastle Clubhouse has made a positive contribution to a particular section of the community. It has been particularly successful at enabling service users to empower themselves in relation to activity and occupation. It was considered that central to this was the need to manage pressure experienced by users and effectively to employ a step-change approach. In this sense, the process has been viewed as being as valuable as the outcome.

The project has also had success in addressing gender related barriers to accessing services. Typically, mental health day services and activities are male dominated making it intimidating for women and reducing the level of take-up amongst this group. This project, however, has been well received by females through positive advertising. The project boasts different, innovative activities that challenge current service provision and this may have played a part.

One of the key targets for the Clubhouse has been to establish a sound member-base at the outset of the project. The project has now been running for over a year and has attracted over 300 members.

The Clubhouse acts as the 'hub' of a 'hub and 'spoke' model supported by referrals and is effectively embedded within the day services system. It took longer than anticipated to reach this state given the timescales involved in actually building up the project members and activities. However, the number of users on the TEP and accessing mainstream employment and going on college courses exceeded that which they had anticipated in the agreed timescale.

In terms of the project's contribution to neighbourhood renewal it contributed to the social care and health theme and was recognised as contributing to a number of PSAs. Firstly, the project aims to improve employment opportunities for a disadvantaged group and secondly they seek to deliver accessible and inclusive services. The project focuses on social inclusion for one of the 'harder-to-reach' and more deprived sectors of the community.

### Mainstreaming

It was stressed that mental health services fit into the national and local agenda. The National Service Framework for Mental Health (NSF) emphasised the effects of social exclusion and the NSF Local Implementation Plan reported the need to address current gaps in service provision and to encourage routes into meaningful activity and employment. Newcastle City Council, and Newcastle Primary Care Trust and other key players were keen to promote a joined-up approach to day services.



# Newcastle Clubhouse

### Contact:

Brendan Hill  
0191 2170377

### NRF Priority:

Health and Employment

### NRF Authority:

Newcastle Local Strategic Partnership

### NRF Funding Level:

Medium

PTO for additional information

**Lead Agent:**

Mental Health Concern

**Main Partners:**

Enterprise 5, Local Authority,  
PCT, Service Users

**Location:**

Newcastle City Council,  
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear

**Main Achievements:**

The project has now been running for over a year and has attracted over 300 members.



## The Learning Curve

Activity was considered to be sustainable given that users have demonstrated a keenness to be involved in something different. It was indicated that given the growth rate of the project within its first year it would be difficult to sustain continued development at such a rate. Although, whilst some users may be members for life, in reality, their involvement may become minimal in future years as their experience of clubhouse promotes their level of independence.

A key target for the next 18 months is for Clubhouse members to undertake an evaluation of all current mental health day services, specifically from a 'user perspective'. Key comments will be attached to the service directory to inform prospective users about experiences, accessibility etc. This will further afford the opportunity for users to develop interviewing and other associated skills.

## Key Lessons

The planning time required to turn an often lengthy and complex development process into action is compounded by a need to gain consensus amongst statutory and non-statutory stakeholders. However, as the initiative has developed this has become a positive element and should help to strengthen the long-term future of the initiative.

## Contact Details

Brendan Hill, Director of Services, Mental Health Concern

0191 2170377