

INFORM

March 2020



Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil • *Gweithredu Gwirfoddol Merthyr Tudful*

infoengine is an online directory of third sector services in Wales. If you are a voluntary organisation or group, by registering your organisation you'll have free listing in their comprehensive directory; be able to promote your services to a wide audience and attract people in your community and beyond!

It is provided and supported by Third Sector Support Wales (TSSW) a partnership of County Voluntary Councils including VAMT and Wales Council for Voluntary Action (WCVA).

It includes over 4,000 services offered by voluntary organisations and community groups. This number increases daily.

infoengine highlights a wide variety of excellent voluntary and community services that are able to provide information and support so that people can make an informed choice.

You can register your organisation free of charge and then add the individual services you offer. You can also upload your photos, logo and leaflets, as well as linking to your website and social media.

Once you are registered, you can edit your entries as and when you need to keep your information up to date. infoengine is also now linked to Dewis Cymru – your third sector services can also be linked to this with the click of a button.













VAMT staff can help you register your organisation. Alternatively we hope to host a drop-in session and have other resources available to help very soon, so watch this space.

infoengine.wales

voluntary services at your fingertips

infoengine.cymru

gwasanaethau gwirfoddol ar flaenau eich bysedd

6 facts about infoengine.wales	6 o ffeithiau am infoengine.cymru
 <p>Fact 1 - infoengine holds a wealth of information available at your fingertips. There are over 7000 services and organisations registered on infoengine.wales</p>	 <p>Ffaith 1 - Mae cyfoeth o wybodaeth ar gael ar infoengine ar flaenau eich bysedd. Mae dros 7000 o wasanaethau a sefydliadau wedi'u cofrestru ar infoengine.cymru</p>
 <p>Fact 2 - Did you know you can register your third sector organisation or service on infoengine for FREE</p>	 <p>Ffaith 2 - Oeddech chi'n gwybod y gallwch gofrestru eich sefydliad neu wasanaeth trydydd sector ar infoengine AM DDIM</p>
 <p>Fact 3 - You can quickly find information on what is available in your area. You can also create your own shortlists</p>	 <p>Ffaith 3 - Gallwch ddod o hyd i wybodaeth yn gyflym am yr hyn sydd ar gael yn eich ardal. Gallwch hefyd greu eich rhestrau byr eich hun</p>
 <p>Fact 4 - You don't have to register on infoengine to use the search facility. You can search by keyword and area</p>	 <p>Ffaith 4 - Does dim rhaid i chi gofrestru ar infoengine i ddefnyddio'r cyfleuster chwilio. Gallwch chwilio yn ôl allweddair ac ardal</p>
 <p>Fact 5 - infoengine is developed and led by a third sector partnership</p>	 <p>Ffaith 5 - Mae infoengine yn cael ei datblygu a'i arwain gan bartneriaeth trydydd sector</p>
 <p>Fact 6 - infoengine has a dedicated support officer. For help call 01597822191 or email infoengine@pavo.org.uk</p>	 <p>Ffaith 6 - Mae gan infoengine swyddog cefnogi pwrpasol. Am gymorth, ffoniwch 01597 822191 neu e-bostiwch infoengine@pavo.org.uk</p>

Visit us online to find help now

Ymwelwch â ni ar-lein i ddod o hyd i help nawr

Welcome to the March edition of Inform in 2020. Our aim is to provide our members with up to date news and information and we welcome contributions and feedback from all readers of this newsletter.



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YOU CAN BE PART OF THIS MAGAZINE TOO!

If you could like to include an article, news item or Focus on your group in the next edition, contact VAMT enquiries for more information: enquiries@vamt.net.

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Adverts/Inserts policy

In each Inform we are able to insert adverts and up to 5 different leaflets from member or other organisations. We have a rate card for private agencies who wish to advertise or place inserts and prices start for £25. There is also a rate card for voluntary organisations for charges covering pre-printed inserts and inserts that need to be copied. Contact VAMT enquiries@vamt.net



@VAMTtweets

@VAMTvolunteer





Focus on 3Gs Youth

INFORM



3Gs Development Trust was commissioned by Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council in 2018 to deliver a Youth Service for Young People aged 11-25. The project is funded through Welsh Government Legacy Funding and provides a drop in service 5 evenings a week and during School Holidays, from the Calon Las Community Hub in Gurnos.

The focus of our work is to support and empower young people. We deliver targeted work around subject areas such as:

- Substance Misuse
- Learning and Accreditation
- Health and Wellbeing
- Physical Activity
- Sexual Health
- Duke of Edinburgh Awards

3Gs Youth Project truly believe that when there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved. During the past 12 months, the Dim Ofn Team at Llamau has been working closely with both staff and young people at the Project.

They have helped empower and educate young people at the centre by delivering numerous workshops, including work around domestic abuse, healthy relationships, sexting, county lines and consent.

During these workshops, the young people have been extremely receptive to the sessions, getting involved and sharing their thoughts and

feelings on these topics. They have also explored homelessness and looked at the impact of sofa surfing and stereotypes around homelessness.

This inspired the young people to raise vital funds for Llamau by taking part in a 'sleep in' and raising £250, playing their part in tackling youth homelessness.

These sessions have had such a positive impact on the young people and their lives that Llamau decided to invite the BBC along to do a segment on the sessions and the young people's responses to the important issues they explore. This will be aired within the next few weeks.

Although this is only a small part of the overall work we deliver, we are very lucky to be supported by many partners including MTCBC Youth Support, Merthyr Valleys Homes, BAROD, VAMT, Calon Las Community Hub, South Wales Police, MTBWYF, Safer Merthyr Tydfil CRE8 Project, Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association, Streetgames, ArtisCommunity, VIBE Youth, Technocamps, and Community Music Wales.

These partners provide vital services, information and advice to the young people attending our project, so a special thank you to all.

We believe that coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success. For further information on the 3Gs Youth Project contact Sarah Williams sarah.williams@3gs.org.uk



The Kindness Project

The Kindness Project at Twyn Action Group is aimed at tackling isolation and loneliness within our communities. Empathy and understanding are important assets and are needed more and more within this changing world of hardship, poverty and unease. Through this desire to show kindness to the most vulnerable in the community the idea was born to provide connections and practical help to those who need it in order to promote positive wellbeing.



The first stage of the project will be creating a channel for referrals in, providing outreach and stabilising an idea forum in order to make sure those who need it benefit to maximum effect. Practical help will include visiting those who will benefit from this project and establishing needs, such as picking up groceries, helping fill in forms etc. and anything else that can have a positive impact.

Whilst carrying out this role you will be establishing connections and assessing needs through outreach, leafleting and community conversations. This is a flexible role in terms of times and days. Through teamwork you will contribute to an idea forum. As this is a pilot project it means there is always room for inspiration and ideas for improvement, therefore your insight is valuable to us as a team.

You will need to be non-judgemental and friendly and willing to provide time and effort to those who need it. Age for volunteering is not relevant within this project as kindness is not age restricted, however we do require you to understand the sensitivity of working with the community and the importance of confidentiality and respect. This is a rewarding project to be involved in and we and the community really need you.

Volunteers needed at Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Care Homes



What will you do?

- Chat to residents about their lives
- Value the knowledge, experiences and opinions of others
- Help with activities such as quizzes, sing-a-longs and games
- We won't ever ask you to do personal care activities

What skills do you need?

- Able to be a friend to individuals, with no "them and us".
- Able to understand the value of life histories and using it to enhance individual well-being.
- Able to create opportunities that will occupy individuals in a meaningful way.

What will I gain?

- Up to date reference given
- Valuable experience of volunteering that you can add to your CV
- Additional, optional 'in house' training on a variety of topics
- Full insurance cover
- Experience of working within a care home setting



Artis Communities Seeking Volunteers

- **Volunteer Chaperone –**
Various locations across Merthyr Tydfil

We are looking for volunteers who will ensure that adults and young people are provided with supervision and assistance while travelling to, and during, events. You will ensure that young people are kept safe and looked after. This involves gathering children ahead of an event, performing a head count and ensuring that they are safely transported to their parents or guardians.

• **Volunteer Crafty Cuppa Support – Merthyr Tydfil**

We are looking for volunteers that are interested in reducing isolation of older people, through supporting the Home Stories project and making home visits with the project lead. You will help older people to identify an object that will bring memories to life, encouraging them to talk about past experiences. You will also link in with the crafty cuppa group, and other Artis Community activities as appropriate to facilitate older people to access activities outside of their home. You will make links with external organisations and identify possible referral opportunities.



**age connects
morgannwg.**

- Do you have 2 hours a week to visit an older person who is feeling lonely or isolated?
- Do you want to learn new skills or enhance existing skills?

Age Connects Morgannwg are looking for volunteers.

Would you like to get involved with us?
If so, get in touch for more information on
01443 490651 or email
helen.davies@acmorgannwg.org.uk

Cancer Aid



We are recruiting volunteers for the reception, shop, drivers and fundraising.

If you can spare a few hours once a week, and would like to meet new friends and gain new skills then please give **Becky** a ring on **01685 379633**

By supporting your local charity you will be helping us to support anyone whose lives have been touched by cancer in the Merthyr Tydfil Area.

For further information on the training and all the above opportunities, plus many more, contact **Frances Barry** on **01685 353901** or **frances.barry@vamt.net**

Willows Centre Troedyrhiw

Willows Centre Troedyrhiw supports a 15 hour a week youth provision. Since April 2019 we have worked with 280 + young people aged 11-25 and provided a range of opportunities for young people to socialise, gain qualifications and volunteer from 14+. We're located at the heart of the community on Bridge Street, Troedyrhiw. Entry is free and there are opportunities to take part in projects and workshops.



There are several fun opportunities for young people and volunteers to take part in now:

Social Drop In – Tuesday to Thursday during term time 4-7.45 pm – relax and meet people – FREE

Music studio Production with Bridge Street Productions – FREE (must book in with staff)

Open mic nights 1 Friday a month – FREE

Youth Forum taking on social action – FREE

Sports Activities every night – FREE

Dance from 4.30 on a Thursday – FREE

Girls only program – every week – FREE

LGBT 13+ peer group – FREE

We also offer plenty of activities for young people aged 10+ during the holidays with our **Fit and Fed project** through Merthyr Tydfil Housing Association and Street Games – check out our Facebook Page,

Instagram or LinkedIn pages to stay up to date.

We've organised community litter picks, delivered a theatre production with the 'Night Out' programme, qualified young people as sports leaders level 1, taken young people to midnight skate and sailed 100 nautical miles with the Island Trust.

We support work placements and volunteers from ages 14+ who gain accredited qualifications in sports, events management, work skills, DoE and YAA.

In February we headed to Cardiff to see the Senedd, and on April 7th we will be delivering a Sports Festival and there are many more opportunities to engage with us.

If you'd like more information, please call **Daniel Townsend Youth and Community Officer** on **01443 692198** or email **dantownsend.willowsyouth@gmail.com**

FareShare Cymru Local Collection Point (LCP) in Merthyr Tydfil

Are you a not-for-profit organisation in/around Merthyr Tydfil that would benefit from weekly deliveries of good surplus food? Get in touch about picking up from our LCP!

At FareShare Cymru, we work with suppliers and distributors in the food industry to access some of their surplus food, then redistribute it to not-for-profit organisations within South Wales.

In 2018/19, 540 tonnes of surplus food were saved and provided over 1 million meals to people in need. We work with local projects and charities that provide food and social support to their beneficiaries. Our current members are a variety of organisations including homeless hostels, refugee centres, church groups, and community cafés.

Visit **fareshare.org.uk/getting-food** to read more and register your interest or contact us directly on **02920 362111 / katie@fareshare.cymru**





Stephens and George Charitable Trust

The Stephens and George Charitable Trust is based at Dowlais Community Centre. The charity was established in February 2012, employing one Charity Coordinator. It has gone from strength to strength and is one of the largest children's community projects, offering a wide range of activities to all age groups within the community.

The charity runs the largest Children's Festival in the UK, "Spread the Word", celebrating World Book Day which 4500 children attend annually. The Chess in Schools initiative has been nominated to go onto the Hay Festival educational programme consecutively between 2015-2019. Michael Adams, the British chess champion is the programme ambassador and the initiative is delivered to over 350 children per week.

At Dowlais Community Centre we have a fully functional Gym and Sports Hall, which are regularly used by our members and by the community. We run regular fitness classes from Legs, Bums and Tums to Circuit Training. Also, at the centre we have a café, which offers a wide range of foods, cakes, buffets or even if you just want to come in for a chat with a coffee or tea.

Other organisations and activities also use our facility, eg, Karate, Archery, Dog Training, Pilates, Kettlebells, Merthyr College, PRU Unit, Merthyr Saints and cheerleading group Merthyr Falcons with the main hall being booked out to many other organisations.

The Centre is run by a small number of staff, and there are opportunities for volunteers to come in and offer their time, while learning and meeting new people to broaden their horizons. Volunteers are offered accredited training in food safety, manual handling and first aid, and the Trust has been awarded the Investing in Volunteers standard.

With the support of the volunteers, the Trust runs play and youth sessions and an after school Club. Its Discovery Club is supported by Children in Need and has an ethos of #NOPHONESORCOMPUTERS. BBC Newsreader Lucy Owen is an ambassador for this project.

If you want to hire the building or receive further information on our activities call **01685 377688** or email: **peter.toomey@stephensandgeorge.co.uk**

Spread the Word Festival



The Festival is now the biggest event in the UK celebrating World Book Day.

This year it takes place on Thursday 23rd April from 9am until 3pm with over 5000 children in Merthyr Tydfil, and is based in 19 locations.

The event is hosted by the Stephens and George Charitable Trust and is in its 7th Year. It is being opened by Eloise Williams, Children's Laureate Wales and Nick Capaldi CEO of Arts Council of Wales at St David's Church Merthyr Tydfil. The First Minister of Wales, Mark Drakeford AM will also be visiting the Festival this year along with many prominent figures from across the arts and youth fields.

The whole ethos of the Festival is to inspire young people to read and write and this year the event theme is "Shakespeare past, present and future".

At 9.30am a parade of over 2000 children will see the town coming to standstill with all participants dressed as Characters from Shakespeare books and plays.

- Over 100 stalls and partnership agencies will be promoting themselves.
- There will be 200 Workshops on the day in 19 venues across Merthyr Tydfil.

For further information contact Helen Hughes on **01685 375331** **helen.hughes@stephensandgeorge.co.uk**

Housing First

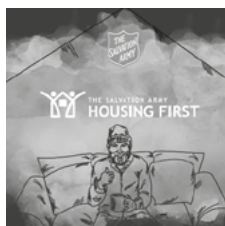
Housing First is a lifelong model where a rough sleeper becomes a tenant in their own home, with the option of intensive, assertive and flexible support to maintain their tenancy whilst addressing other support needs. Since the Project was commissioned in November 2018, the Project has supported forty-two clients at outreach, referring to external agencies and supporting them with their needs. Three individuals have been placed in tenancies with the Project with two continuing to successfully sustain their tenancies.

Tyler, whose name has been changed to protect his identity, became homeless after alcohol abuse turned his life upside down. Tyler says that Housing First has given him stability and hope after being placed in a tenancy in December 2019 with intensive support from the Project team.

Tyler spent eight months rough sleeping in Pontypool and Cardiff before returning to Merthyr Tydfil where he engaged with the local council and gained temporary supported accommodation. He returned to rough sleeping after losing his place in April 2019 where he started to engage with the Housing First team.

"The Housing First staff are great and helped me out with sorting out my benefits, got me registered with a new doctor and they're giving me all the emotional support I need. I'm getting some structure and stability into my life and life can only get better for me. I feel good now – I can go home, lock the door, switch on the heating, get some food and sit down and watch a DVD and I know it's my home. I feel like I'm going up the ladder and life is on the up"

Are you rough sleeping or a professional who works with someone who is rough sleeping? For further information on the Project, please contact **Cara Forsey – Project Manager** on **07884 563210** or **visit our office based in Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil.**



Cymorth Tai – from Hafal



Hafal has been funded for a new Supporting People project called Cymorth Tai - an Accommodation Support Worker for the project will work towards reducing homelessness for adults in the County of Merthyr by helping individuals and their families to stabilise and improve home life, so it becomes sustainable in the longer term. The role involves working with vulnerable adults who in addition to being at risk of becoming homeless may have: poor mental health; past or current experience of substance misuse; been recently released from custody.

The purpose of this role is to support individuals who are at risk of homelessness through mediation by liaising and working with families, friends and landlords. The main aim is to prevent homelessness through a variety of mediation methods in order to maintain and sustain the individual's current accommodation where it is safe to do so.

Any queries, potential referrals etc. can be directed to **Alison Evans** on **07973 427458** or **Donna Evans** on **07805 665527**.



What can understanding the 'everyday economy' do for Treharris?



You may or may not have heard about the foundational (or everyday) economy. There's a growing interest in it and in ways to protect and promote the more mundane parts of the economy. But what exactly does it mean and how could it benefit places like Treharris?

The 'everyday economy' are the things we use and rely on, that are in most places where people live and that are vital to our daily lives and wellbeing. They include housing, schooling, utilities, food and much more.

Around 1 in 4 of all jobs in the south Wales valleys are estimated to be in the everyday economy.

These businesses and jobs are sometimes overlooked but are still important; some are well established and firmly rooted in their locality. By having a thorough understanding of the everyday economy in places like Treharris, as well as the needs and activities of the local community, it can tell us what opportunities, barriers and potential exists and what's needed to grasp it to help retain money locally and generate more local employment.

Almost half the workers of Treharris commute between 10-30 miles elsewhere for work, which suggests that there's scope to generate more local jobs.

Treharris has an above average amount of people renting from social landlords. Social landlords are increasingly using local firms and sourcing materials locally for their building and property maintenance work, so there's the potential to support the everyday economy through the homes people are already living in. Treharris also has several care homes that provide vital services to some of our most vulnerable people and has two primary schools.

What could be the opportunities for them to source their food and services more locally to generate more money as well as reduce their carbon footprint?

Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council's "Meanwhile" project is also looking at how empty units on Fox Street (as well as other buildings across Merthyr Tydfil) can be brought back into use by pump-priming new enterprises (social and private). The closure of the post office on the high street is an example of a community asset that offers far more value than just profit and loss and the Bevan Foundation's project is also about understanding how community assets are also part of the everyday economy. Taken together, these things alone show that there might be some real opportunities to explore.

By working closely with key voluntary groups, businesses, organisations and services, the Bevan Foundation will be finding out about how best to grow the everyday economy and promote its potential. If you would like to know more or get involved then please contact

Lloyd Jones on **01685 350938** or email **lloyd.jones@bevanfoundation.org**

Gypsy Maker 4 at g39

An evening of talks and discussion with Isaac Blake, Cas Holmes, Dan Turner and Daniel Baker

Date: Saturday May 23rd 6pm-8pm (free admission)

Venue: g39 Oxford St, Cardiff CF24 3DT



The Romani Cultural & Arts Company is proud to announce an evening of talks and discussion in conjunction with g39. The event takes place to mark the end of the tour of new works by the artists Cas Holmes and Dan Turner. These exciting exhibitions of newly commissioned artworks are the latest in the RCAC's ground breaking Gypsy Maker project—an initiative that supports the development of innovative works by established and emerging Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists. The Gypsy Maker project expands the work of the RCAC by continuing to engage GRT communities and the wider public in ongoing dialogue about the ways in which art continues to inform the lives of individuals and communities today.

Cas Holmes trained in fine art and currently works with textiles and mixed media. She is the author of several books for Batsford Publications including *Stitch Stories* (2015) and *Textile Landscape: Painting with Cloth* (2018). The transient nature of Holmes' work and process underpins her compulsion to engage with our built and natural landscapes—with people and place.

'The opportunity to work with and be mentored by the Gypsy Maker 4 project allows me to pause to reflect on my identity and mixed heritage. With migration, changes in our working lives and increasing opportunities to travel, certainties about who we are and our place in the world are in flux.' Cas Holmes

Dan Turner is an artist and educator. A Romani Gypsy, born in Dartford, Kent, Turner attended St Martins School of Art where he studied Sculpture. His work has recently appeared in FUTUROMA at the Venice Biennale in 2019. By using Transactional Objects which have significance across cultures, Turner examines how Gypsy, Roma and Traveller cultures meet and interact with the dominant culture.

'Working with the RCAC on its Gypsy Maker project provides a unique opportunity that is rarely

available, especially to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller groups. Its approach of tirelessly commissioning ground breaking work and projects has helped promote understanding about GRT communities. In the process it has changed people's lives, including mine.' Dan Turner

Isaac Blake is Executive Director of the Romani Cultural & Arts Company in Cardiff, UK, which is supported by a variety of major funders and government departments. RCAC is now celebrating its 10th anniversary. He is a proud Romani Gypsy and has worked as a professional dancer and choreographer. Isaac was Dance Curator to the RomArchive the international digital archive for art of the Roma.

"I am proud once again to provide a platform for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller artists to showcase the best of our community's culture and heritage. The resulting work from Gypsy Maker 4 is illuminating and I know that my community and the wider public will benefit enormously from it."

Daniel Baker is a Romani Gypsy born in Kent, UK in 1961. An artist, curator and theorist, he holds a PhD on the subject of Gypsy aesthetics from the Royal College of Art, London. Baker curated FUTUROMA at the 58th International Art Exhibition at the Venice Biennale 2019. Publications include *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art* (2013) and *Ex Libris* (2009). Baker's work can be found in collections worldwide.

For more information contact
Isaac.blake@romaniarts.co.uk



Cas Holmes



Dan Turner



Merthyr Valley Ramblers

The day before storm Ciara hit, 19 Merthyr Valley Ramblers undertook a 7 ¼ mile walk from Fforest Fawr carpark, which is just above Castel Coch. In

glorious sunshine and ably guided by Chris, we were treated to some fantastic views of Nantgarw and Trefforest from the top of Pen Y Crug and later, panoramic views of Caerphilly from Caerphilly common. Having dropped down for lunch at the Caerphilly mountain snack bar we then headed downhill through some very muddy fields to the start point.

More information on this, future and previous walks can be found on our website, Twitter and Facebook pages.

Fancy joining us? Please contact MVR for more information. For more information visit:

<http://www.merthyrramblers.org.uk/>



Nurture Equip Thrive: 1-to-1 Health and Well-being programme

Nurture Equip Thrive (NET) is a FREE Health and Well-being programme run by Groundwork Wales.

The NET programme is for employed individuals who are currently off work on long-term sick (minimum 4 weeks). The programme works with these individuals on a 1-to-1 basis to help improve their health and well-being and to help them return to work as soon as possible. To be eligible, individuals must work or live in Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Bridgend, Blaenau Gwent or Torfaen.

Susan was employed and had been off work sick since November 2018. In September 2019, Susan met with NET Health Coach to discuss a health and wellbeing plan to help her return to work. Susan expressed that she wanted to build her confidence, improve her motivation, and increase her physical activity in the outdoors.

At the start of the NET engagement, Susan disclosed that she was struggling to socialise with old friends and strike up friendships with new people. She had also lost confidence in visiting places of interest, where she once used to socialise, for example local parks and walking routes.

Supported by NET, Susan engaged in 5 local walks

within the Caerphilly borough, including; Cwmcarn Forest Drive, Parc Penallta, Pontywaun Canal and Waunfawr Park.

Whilst engaged with NET, Susan also attended an external 8-week mindfulness course. She found this very beneficial and continues to practice mindfulness every day for 45 minutes.

In January 2020, Susan began a phased return to work over a period of 4-weeks. Susan now describes how she is coping a lot better with everyday tasks and feels more confident.

Susan stated: "I enjoyed getting outside and exercising in the locality. It gave me a sense of purpose which I lost when my mental health declined. NET gave me back the confidence I had lost whilst being ill. This helped me when the time came to return to work. I am very grateful for NET's support during a difficult time in my life."

If you are employed but currently off work sick for 4-weeks or more, please contact us to find out how we can help you: **NET@groundwork.org.uk** or **01495 222605** *This name has been changed

Updates to New Pathways' Service

New Pathways is developing to offer a range of options and choices through our new **Wellbeing Pathway** structure. We acknowledge the impact that waiting a long time for an appointment has on clients. We also recognise that 1-2-1 counselling may not be the best option for all clients. Therefore, we are expanding our services in an effort to meet the needs of all of our clients more comprehensively. We have worked alongside, and collaborated with, New Pathways' clients to ensure that all of our specialist support and resources are of the best possible quality. When you refer a client in for our specialised trauma service for survivors of rape and sexual abuse, children or adults, please inform them that these are now the options available. Please let us know if they might be interested in any of the following when referring:



Resources/strategy booklets, self-help booklets (printable or can be emailed)

Family support groups

Volunteering, and raising awareness events

'Bridging the Gap' coping skills group, 6- week course

Stabilisation groups; 'Sea Change' & 'Calming the Waves'- 10-week coping skills courses

'SURE for Mental Health' classes and drop- ins, such as arts and crafts, walking groups etc.

While clients wait for counselling, we offer different support options as listed above. Sometimes clients wish to attend a stabilisation course or psychoeducation groups and then go on to attend counselling. Some clients access these options and then find that they no longer require counselling. At New Pathways we recognise that each client is individual and might need a very different pathway through the service. This is why we have developed the range of options we have to offer to clients. We also have our new client Engagement and Wellbeing Officers who can help to guide clients through these choices and offer support to clients who are waiting for counselling.

Client Engagement and Wellbeing Officers

We can complete different assessments over the phone with clients to check their specific needs for support and inform them of all the options available. Our Wellbeing Officers and counsellors can book clients in for these assessments, can complete follow-up calls, book clients onto courses or classes and support clients who are waiting for counselling. Wellbeing Officers can also email or post out a range of resources to support with a range of issue including, sleep difficulties, understanding trauma, mindfulness, flashbacks, preparing for counselling, grounding skills as well as extra information on resources and apps that some clients may find useful.



Beyond Counselling

New Pathways encourages feedback on how to continuously improve and expand our services. Clients sometimes wish to get involved in co-production and collaboration opportunities beyond counselling. Some clients have helped create leaflets and posters while others have become involved with volunteering. This is never an expectation but is something we offer beyond counselling to those who wish to feed back into the continuous expansion and development of the service. We also offer Service User and Peer Support groups as

options during and beyond counselling.

Service Referrals to:

enquiries@newpathways.org.uk

Training Enquiries to:

Training@newpathways.org.uk

www.newpathways.org.uk

Contact: Head Office, Merthyr Tydfil 01685 379310

Cardiff: 02920 220390

Swansea: 01792 966660

Newport: 01633 250205

Risca: 01495 233971

Aberystwyth: 01970 610124

Newtown: 01267 226166

Carmarthen: 01267 235464



SURE for Mental Health Bitesize Training

Wednesday, 20th May • Willow House, 11 Church Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 0BS Tel: 01685 379310

About this Event

New Pathways' SURE for Mental Health Community Project is providing fully funded mental health training to members of the community (particularly volunteers) to build confidence in supporting people with mental health issues.

This training is funded by the Lottery Community Fund and has been developed to enable people who do not have access to Mental Health training, due to monetary restrictions, to get mental health awareness training that we believe everyone should have. The course has been developed by New Pathways, and ratified by Mental Health professionals.

By the end of the training the learner will be able to:

- Describe good Mental Health
- Recognise common Mental Health issues (such as Depression, Anxiety, Bipolar Disorder and Schizophrenia)
- Use skills to support someone who may be self-harming
- Describe some self-help techniques for Mental Health issues
- Have an understanding of the skills needed to respond to someone who is suicidal and potentially preserve life

This training runs from 9.30am-4.30pm

This training is open to, and suitable for, anyone in the community, from volunteers and community workers to people who want to help their family and friends; and is particularly useful for those with no previous mental health training. The course is supplemented by our SURE for Mental Health mobile phone app, which has handy "how-to" guides.

To book please visit Eventbrite - <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/new-pathways-15318719638>

The SURE for Mental Health Community Project is looking for a free venue to deliver fully funded Mental Health Training to the Merthyr Tydfil / Rhondda Cynon Taff area. The training is aimed at the community, therefore anyone is able to attend. Please call Jenine Hughes on 01633 250205 if you are able to help.

You're Hired! 3

Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil have our third employability project currently running.



The project is called "You're Hired! 3". Participants of the project have to be 25 years old or over and living in Merthyr with a work limiting health condition.

All participants taken on to the "You're Hired! 3" project start a paid placement with us at Citizens Advice Merthyr Tydfil. The placements will run for 16 weeks and will be between 20 to 30 hours per week of paid work.

The participants will have a contract of employment with us and will be supported by our project co-ordinator to build their skills and get into paid employment or self-employment.

Each participant will receive tailored support based on their needs and wants. They will also work closely with our team to understand our service and build skills along the way; e.g. admin skills, communication skills, telephone skills and ICT skills.

Referrals should be sent to **claire.roper@citizensadvicemt.org.uk**.

Tackling Loneliness and Isolation – Project Update

In partnership with the **Stephens and George Charitable Trust**, a **Men's Shed** project is now running at Dowlais Community Centre. The project aims to encourage men to put their practical skills to good use, have fun and meet new people in the process.

The Men's Shed project provides opportunities for men to meet in an informal setting and participate in any activities they choose. These can include activities like gardening, woodwork, and carving, indoor curling and many more. This is a great opportunity for men to meet use existing skills, learn new skills or just to put the world to right over a cuppa. The project is all about friendship, fun and getting out.

The project runs every Friday morning 10-1 at Dowlais Community Centre.

Connecting People and Nature supported by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil are running **weekly walking sessions and outdoor gym sessions every Monday morning 10.30-11.30**. The group meets at Aberfan Community Centre, and provides a chance to get fitter and socialise at the same time. Sessions are run by a qualified instructor and cost £2 per session.

Various new groups in the Aberfan, Merthyr Vale and Mount Pleasant areas will soon be established in collaboration with **Invest Local Ynysowen**. These will include a **Men's Shed project** as well as a **Repair Café** and hopefully a **Walking Football** team

Gurnos Men's Social Group is a new initiative set up for men of various ages and abilities. The activities on hand range from indoor curling, magnetic darts, pool, cinema showings and offer a unique place where men can come socialise meet new people and have a cup of tea and coffee in a friendly informal environment.

These activities are low impact and can suit all levels of mobility.

The sessions will run weekly on Wednesday morning 10-12 at Calon Las community Hub.

A new group has been formed at **St Tydfil's Court in Caedraw** called **"The Golden Girls"** This is an informal group of **ladies over 50** who share similar interests and want to learn new skills as well as participate in various activities.

The group meet on Tuesday between 1-3pm. The group are currently undertaking basic IT classes over a 6 week period. During these sessions participants will learn how to stay safe online, internet shopping and much more. All sessions are free of charge and refreshments are also provided. The group is supported by Merthyr Valleys Homes, Digital Communities Wales and Caedraw primary school.



For further information on any of the above please contact **Ryan 07503954158** or email **ryan.bevan@vamt.net**

Ryan can also deliver **Dementia Friends Information Sessions**, hour long sessions which raise awareness of dementia, its signs and symptoms, and the importance of seeing the person rather than the illness. Sessions are free of charge and can be delivered to any organisation that wants to become dementia friendly.

Ryan is also keen to recruit local volunteers to support local community services and initiatives. If you'd like to get involved, contact Ryan on the number above.

Free Part-Time courses at Merthyr College

Do you want to learn new skills and develop your career further?

Merthyr Tydfil College offer a range of **FREE** part-time courses aimed at fitting in around you and your lifestyle. Our wide selection of courses means that we can help you develop the necessary knowledge and skills to advance in your chosen career.



The courses on offer are:

- | | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Creative Industries | • Web Design | • Digital Photography | • Employability Skills |
| • ESOL | • Retail | • Printmaking | • Welsh in the Workplace |
| • Hybrid Motor Vehicle | • ECDL | • Vocational Preparation Course | |
| • Welding | • Literacy & Numeracy | | |

To find out more visit **www.merthyr.ac.uk** or come to our next **open evening** on the **11th March 2020** between 4 -7 pm to see our fantastic facilities and talk to our friendly and welcoming tutors.

@ SMTcymru Tel: 01685 353999 Email: hm@smt.org.uk

SMT

Supporting Safe and Confident Communities
Cefnogi Cymunedau Diogel a Hyderus

RECONNECT 50+

Funded via the ICF Community Capacity Grant Scheme

The aim of the project is to assist individuals aged 50+ who are lonely and isolated get "Reconnected" back into the community, building their social interaction and networks by means of interactive, group activities and opportunities to learn or share skills.

Reconnect is a mentoring project delivered by trained volunteers who offer a 12 week mentoring contract. Clients are assisted in making a plan towards specific, life changing goals via small, achievable steps. The volunteer will walk alongside the client on their journey of achievement.

We have set up activity taster groups throughout Merthyr Tydfil to assist our clients and encourage 50+ community members to mix more.

Recently Helena Herklots CBE visited the project to present certificates and catch up with ongoing activities.

For more information contact **Helen** on **01685 353999**.



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Merthyr Tydfil Rotary Club – Unboxing a Little Happiness



Rotary
Rotary Club of Merthyr Tydfil
South Wales. UK RI Dist 1150

Over 150 shoe boxes filled with goods for orphanages in Eastern Europe have been shipped from Merthyr Tydfil. The boxes are filled with toys for the boys & girls. Teenagers up to 18 years will receive sportswear, writing material, toiletries. Also included are household goods etc. for families and for new mothers include like baby wipes, cotton wool buds, baby clothing and soft toys.

The scheme in which is in its 25 year started by a Rotary club in North-West England has snowballed. Today some 50,000 Rotary shoe boxes are sent out per year and are shipped out not only to Romania but many countries in central and Eastern Europe.

Boxes have been filled by many local churches in the borough, Merthyr Valley Homes, and some schools. These were then taken to Chepstow to a central collection point ready for shipment to Europe.



Also, in early February Rotarians raised over £1,100 for Marie Curie's Great Daffodil Appeal which was collected at Asda Merthyr Tydfil.

If you would like to get involved in the future contact **Rtn Keith Jones** on **01685 371372** or e-mail **keithjones91@yahoo.co.uk**.



This newsletter has been published by Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil, Voluntary Action Centre, 89 – 90 Pontmorlais, High Street, Merthyr Tydfil, CF47 8UH. Telephone: (01685) 353900

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The views expressed in this edition of Inform are not necessarily those of Voluntary Action Merthyr Tydfil. Croesawir erthyglau nail ai'n ddwyieithog neu'n uniaith Gymraeg.

The closing date for articles for the next edition (June 2020) is Friday 27 May 2020.