



Thrive

Mental Health
Star Awards 2020



West Midlands
Combined Authority



[#thriveawards2020](https://twitter.com/thriveawards2020)

Celebrating the unsung heroes in mental health who make a difference to the lives of people in the West Midlands

Event Programme

6.45 - 7.45pm	Arrival, Buffet and Entertainment from Phil Taylor (Magician)
7.45pm	Opening Remarks Adrian Goldberg
7.50pm	Welcome Sean Russell, Director of Implementation, WMCA
7.55pm	Sir Norman Lamb
8.05pm	Musical Entertainment Wellbeing Choir
8.25pm	Poppy Jaman OBE, City Mental Health Alliance
8.30pm	Comedy Entertainment Barbara Nice
8.50pm	Presentation of Awards Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Star: Individual Mental Health Star: Team Service Organisation Black Country (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) Mental Health Star: Individual Mental Health Star: Team Service Organisation Coventry, Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire, Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Stratford upon Avon, Redditch Mental Health Star: Individual Mental Health Star: Team Service Organisation Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire, Cannock Chase and Tamworth Mental Health Star: Individual Mental Health Star: Team Service Organisation Young Person (Age 16 – 25) Cariss Evans Award Physical Activity and Mental Health – In association with Include Me West Midlands Employer – Outstanding manager support for mental health Mental Health Super Star Award
	Andy Street CBE, Mayor of the West Midlands
	Mental Health Super Star Award
10.00pm	Closing Remarks Adrian Goldberg

Shortlisted Nominees

Birmingham and Solihull

Individual

Khalid Ali has volunteered as a public governor for the Birmingham and Solihull NHS Mental Health Foundation Trust for more than 11 years and has secured over £15m of private sector investment for the trust. In addition to this, he works at Birmingham Urban Rhythm Network (BURN) where he mentors young people suffering from poor mental health and the impacts of knife crime and gang culture. The youngsters he works with develop skills in music and film production as well as gaining a sense of pride and self-worth. Recently Khalid set up Think About Mental Health a new organisation to improve access to mental health services by young people.

Former nurse **Gwen Gardner** volunteers at Newbigin Community Trust in Birmingham and provides support to people who are lonely or vulnerable. She also runs a swimming group for children with complex health needs which gives their families some respite from the challenges and demands of childcare. Many people have acknowledged her support as a key reason for them avoiding or recovering from mental health difficulties. People feel safe opening up to Gwen and even when someone is unwell she shows compassion and acceptance without judgement or trying to tell them what to do.

Evan Grant set up the Cameron Grant Memorial Trust in honour of his son, Cameron, who took his own life in November 2014, aged just 21. Cameron suffered from depression for seven years before his death and kept it hidden from family and friends. The Trust was set up to support other young sufferers of poor mental health. Evan's commitment to suicide prevention across the West Midlands and beyond is widely acknowledged and he chairs the multi-agency suicide prevention board for Solihull. There, he provides boundless enthusiasm and creativity to a complex agenda that is central to driving the zero suicide five year strategy for the area.

Team, Service, Organisation

Staff at **John Taylor Hospice** used newfound knowledge through the Thrive at Work programme to develop and refine their practices on mental health. This includes recruiting wellbeing champions, sending staff on mental health first aid training, and embedding a culture of openness among staff on mental health resulting in sickness rates dropping from 9.35% to 3.66% in one year.

Birmingham City University students, **Katie Dixon, Hannah Matheson and Caroline Hudson**, negotiated funding to provide full (and free) access to the Headspace App, thus enabling students and staff in their faculty, the opportunity to access mindfulness and meditation to relieve anxieties and improve mental wellbeing. The team arranged for a day's presentation, showcasing the App, within the University building. As a result of their intervention staff and students have accessed a useful app that they might not have been aware of, nor been able to afford the subscription.

The Bedlam 2019 Festival (a partnership between Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust, Midlands Art Centre, Birmingham Repertory Theatre, Sampad & Geese Theatre) promotes mental health and wellbeing through the arts. The festival team worked collaboratively with service users, clinical staff, venues, students and university staff, media, artists and local businesses to generate funds, build empathy and deliver maximum impact on the issue of mental wellness. Over 30,000 people were captivated by dozens of performances and exhibitions, including the dramatisation of the highly stigmatised subject of perinatal mental health issues affecting the South Asian community.

West Midlands Police (WMP) Trauma Risk Management team are volunteers within the force who support their colleagues following traumatic incidents such as fatalities, serious injuries and sexual offences. The team have already helped many officers cope with loss and serious injury and have provided support or referrals to expert help. The team guide colleagues towards making better informed choices about the help they need. They also make sure that colleagues remain healthy and able to continue to serve their communities.

Shortlisted Nominees

Black Country

Individual

A Facebook message encouraging people struggling with mental health to meet up in a local pub grew a community of a few dozen people to more than 500 members in just a couple of months. **Sam Chatwin's** message and subsequent efforts have been hailed by her peers. She posts notices promoting support in the local area at locations where people have died by suicide. Sam also meets with GPs and local officials, and raises funds through raffles and activities. Around 40-50 people regularly attend the meetup group and each week new members join who are welcomed and find it helpful.

In spite of experiencing his own mental health problems, **James Firkins** launched Man Age to get men talking to each other in an effort to prevent male suicide. James runs the initiative himself while studying for a Master's degree, and works with many organisations across the UK. Although he isn't a healthcare practitioner, he works relentlessly to increase his knowledge in order to help others and often prioritises this above his own needs. James goes above and beyond to help others, whether he knows them personally or not.

Laura Horobin thrives in her volunteer youth work with the Air Cadets and is passionate about improving the mental health and wellbeing of the young people in her care. Being aware of the warning signs of poor mental health enables her to encourage people to talk to her confidentially at crucial moments. Laura is a positive role model and inspires young people, improving their self-esteem, and a sense of belonging through outdoor pursuits, sports, community engagement, and learning and development. At every opportunity she provides a safe and supportive environment for young people in need.

Dave Thornton works as a bus station supervisor in the Black Country. One day he noticed that a young male colleague had lost weight and seemed lethargic, distant and disinterested at work. The colleague was suffering from depression which was having a major impact on his family, and included young children. Dave offered his home to the colleague for a few days: feeding him, listening to him and making him feel safe. The colleague has subsequently returned to his family home, and is functioning much better because of Dave's intervention.

Team, Service, Organisation

Newcomers to the UK face anxieties of uncertainty with their immigration status. Often they need to find a home and school for their children whilst navigating unfamiliar services, further complicated by language barriers and cultural differences. **Brushstrokes** provides a place of welcome, offering friendship and a helping hand for some of our most vulnerable residents. Settled in one of Sandwell's most deprived areas and supporting diverse communities, the team help migrants to feel valued and connected. This small organisation offers a wide range of community led activities: from practical support – help with migration/housing advice, language learning, food provision, etc. to offering companionship and inclusiveness such as community cafes, days out and family events.

Backed by Wolverhampton Wanderers FC, the **Head 4 Health** programme destigmatises mental health among football fans. The 6-week programme includes workshops and physical activity to improve mental wellbeing and signposts participants to specialist services when needed. The Foundation staff and volunteers ensure compassion and understanding with all participants throughout the programme. Since March 2019, 159 people have signed up to the programme with many reducing their reliance on medication while seeing significant improvements to their wellbeing.

Staff and pupils at **Holly Lodge School** are supported with their mental health through a range of activities and courses provided at the school, including mindfulness, yoga, cookery and bowling. Staff also have the opportunity to have 1:1 sessions with a trained educational psychologist to talk through any concerns in relation to work or wider areas. They also get opportunities to reflect on their own mental health. Parents of children with special educational needs are also supported with access to drop in sessions with an educational psychologist and a behavioural expert.

Pat Brown is a volunteer with Pets as Therapy and along with therapy dog, **Crumble**, she visits Penn Hospital in Wolverhampton to spend time with patients on the wards. The pair take the time to speak to everyone and give patients the opportunity to interact with Crumble. Their presence has a significant impact on the patients and staff on the ward. Since Pat and Crumble started visiting the wards at Penn, staff have noticed better communication and strengthened rapport with patients. They have also seen the calming effect that Crumble has brought to the wards, which at times can be a welcome distraction.

Shortlisted Nominees

Coventry, Warwickshire County Council, North Warwickshire, Rugby, Nuneaton and Bedworth, Stratford upon Avon, Redditch

Individual

Mark Gibbins runs Coventry Men's Shed, a community group that supports male sufferers of anxiety, depression and other mental health conditions. Mark provides therapeutic activities such as cookery, arts and crafts, woodwork and photography, alongside 1:1 support. He encourages group members to open up to each other about their problems and they are actively involved in deciding how the sessions are run. He encourages members to spread the word beyond the group to others who are struggling. Having suffered from anxiety himself in the past, Mark empathises with the group and is a great listener. He has now received NHS funding to continue the project for another year at least.

Leanne Howlett founded By Your Side, a service user forum to support parents with perinatal mental health (PMH) problems, after experiencing PMH herself. This condition affects 20% of new and expectant mums. Leanne has worked hard to raise public awareness and end the stigma associated with it. She organises a range of social events and activities for affected mums, but also dads. She is actively involved in local action groups and chairs the local Maternity Voices Partnership.

Bill Nichols launched clothing range, DRM (Dream) following the loss of his younger brother, Ollie, five years ago. The clothes are designed, modelled and photographed by local people, most of whom struggle with mental health. As well as selling clothes, he runs a blog where people share their stories and also recently held a successful mental health event to raise money for Young Minds. The event attracted over 100 attendees, and provided a safe place for people to talk in a judgement-free environment, even displaying poetry and art too. DRM is the first of its kind in the area, allowing people to express themselves and feel better.

Team, Service, Organisation

Ahead of Wellbeing CIC, launched in June 2019, provides free mental health support to anyone who needs it, offering talking therapies, hypnotherapy, meditation, massage, IEMT, reiki etc. It is run and delivered by peer support groups, giving participants a break from their hectic lives through curry buddy evenings, socialisation suppers where people can meet up and chat with others.

Alcester Town Council teamed up with local children's charity, the Lifespace Trust, to deliver a project in three secondary schools in Alcester. The project identifies the mental health challenges facing them and their peers, so they could understand the type of support they need. The project began with delivering accredited Youth Mental Health First Aid training to 64 local young people. This has provided the opportunity to further encourage young people's involvement in learning, decision making and peer-led approaches to mental health support. They are now empowered to work together to find solutions for life's challenges.

Sophia Pregnancy Loss Support cares for families suffering from the loss of a stillborn baby, pre-natal or postnatal. They are not professional counsellors but provide a warm and comforting support network. Bereaved families may share stories and pictures of their children with each other and the group send out cards on 'angelversaries' so families know they are not alone. They also arrange to meet on special occasions like Mothers' Day and Fathers' Day to do bubble releases to bring families together on what can be a difficult time so they can support each other too. Recognising the wider impact of a lost pregnancy, they also support fathers with a Facebook group to share their thoughts and feelings. In time when families need professional support, they will source a contact and point families in the right direction with compassion and kindness.

Shortlisted Nominees

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Herefordshire, Cannock Chase and Tamworth

Individual

Tonia Barden is an adult mental health support worker who was nominated for the care she provides to service users and their carers, one of whom described her as a person that 'would understand what [they were] going through'. The carer continues with a positive description of Tonia as a testament to her belief that 'angels really do exist'.

Louise Dutton was nominated for the voluntary support she provides at Stafford Hospital to families, including a service user and their partner. The couple were given advice and guided through the complexities of service provision. Louise was described as a good listener to the couple's problems and frustrations. She also displayed a great knowledge and understanding of mental health helping to empower them to make decisions about appropriate care.

Cathi Shovlin volunteers at Herefordshire Mind and is now its longest serving trustee. Over the ten years she has been there she has given up a substantial amount of her time to support mental health causes and often takes annual leave or unpaid leave to carry out her voluntary work. Her professional background is in HR and as well as volunteering as a trustee, she also provides pro bono HR advice to Herefordshire Mind so that it can maximise its limited resources on frontline delivery, and can benefit from a strong and well led workforce to deliver its mission.

Team, Service, Organisation

Bright Star Boxing Academy provide a free programme, called Counterpunch, to boxers with poor mental health. The sessions allow participants to talk and set goals as a way of tackling their condition and turning their lives around. The Academy has extended the programme to Year 11 students who attend the sessions one day a week over a term. They have also delivered sessions for victims of sexual and domestic abuse. In all cases participants gain confidence, get support and a sense of self-belief. The sessions are run by a team of 9 coaches trained in mental health first aid.

Jennifer Caldecott, Louise Heap and Gemma Coulman-Smith and the team from Mind in Telford and Shropshire run the Wellbeing Centre at Court Street Medical Practice. Since the centre opened they have shown their enormous commitment to supporting those with mental health issues and have made the service integral to the medical practice. They offer social prescribing in a non-traditional way by seamlessly moving patients between the surgery and the Wellbeing Centre to get the patient the support they need. They have already supported over 500 patients in 18 months.

Shropshire Sanctuary provides individuals in crisis with an opportunity to talk in a safe, confidential, non-clinical environment. Trained staff listen with empathy and without judgement, gently offering support and signposting. Visitors to Shropshire Sanctuary are often experiencing suicidal thoughts and staff help them to de-escalate their crisis, before ensuring they are returned home safely with dignity and arranging follow up care. Since Shropshire Sanctuary launched in 2017, they have supported with over 1200 visitors and helped prevent around 700 deaths by suicide.

Shortlisted Nominees Young Person (Age 16– 25)*

Individual

Sophia Badhan has worked tirelessly to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health by sharing the story of her battle with anorexia in presentations and assemblies. As her school's first Wellbeing Ambassador, she has devised and delivered tailored workshops championing early intervention and encouraging her fellow pupils to open up. She is a member of Think 4 Brum Youthboard, and works with a number of local NHS Trusts. She has also made the case for improved mental health services with her MP, spoken at a national conference about the importance of involving young people in their own care, and was recently awarded a prestigious Diana Award for her campaigning work.

Joel Hales-Waller volunteers for the Edgbaston Foundation and is the lead volunteer for our Cricket Full Circle Programme as well as an accomplished sportsman. He is a national table cricket champion, decorated competitive swimmer, Boccia coach and trained European Young Health Champion all of which provide him with the skills needed to contribute to Cricket Full Circle. The programme takes inclusive cricket into Birmingham's residential care homes and day centres, allowing residents the opportunity to compete against each other through the Edgbaston Foundation Clock Cricket League. Joel volunteered on the programme from the beginning, using his skills to support a pilot project in a local care home, assessing the suitability and popularity of inclusive cricket and supporting the Edgbaston Foundation to consult the local community via showcases.

Sophie Meakin dedicates much of her time to improving the lives of people with mental illness. Studying a PhD exploring the public stigma associated with a mental health disorder, she hopes her research may inspire a change to attitudes. She also works as a neuro-enablement support worker, helping people with various issues including neurological disorders, brain injuries, postpartum psychosis, depression and anxiety, to name a few. She promotes positive mental health and wellbeing through this work, taking the time to ask clients what activities they would like to do and facilitating this where possible. In her spare time she also volunteers with Shout UK.

Shortlisted Nominees Cariss Evans Award: Research and Innovation in community CAMH** Services

Individual

Dr. Amit Biswas is a psychiatrist who has often worked in Birmingham and Solihull, but he is also a filmmaking enthusiast who uses his love of the arts to tackle stigmatised and complex subjects associated with mental health. His recent project has included an internationally acclaimed film - The Bridge. In his work, Dr. Biswas encourages young people to use arts for expressing fears and initiating dialogue across communities. A musical he directed, Maya (Illusion), focused on a young man living with Borderline Personality Disorder who is rejected by his family. The musical premiered at the Bloomsbury Theatre in London.

Jay Eeles overhauled crisis care at the Black Country Partnership NHS Trust. She launched The Crisis Intervention and Home Treatment Team which responds quickly and intensively to children and young people, and their families and carers. The team offer specialist services to those children and young people whose needs, usually due to the risk or severity of their mental illness, require urgent intervention and support when they are experiencing a mental health crisis. Targeted treatments are tailored to the needs of the young person and their family, and include short term interventions up-to 8 weeks or until the crisis subsides and a referral for ongoing support if needed.

Dr Kate Thomas is a Clinical Psychologist with the Learning Disability CAMHS team and Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust. Kate is described by her colleagues as a caring clinician who goes out of her way to ensure that her patients are seen. She offers a high standard of clinical care and she goes above and beyond in making sure appropriate referrals are made to social care and other external agencies to provide the families she sees with the best possible care and support. At every opportunity, Kate ensures that the views of young people and their families are at the centre of any therapeutic decisions.

*All WMCA areas

**CAMH Services - Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

Shortlisted Nominees Sport and Physical Activity*

Individual

Kerry Bradley volunteers for Dudley Mind's Jolly Joggers. She has been instrumental in its success and coordinates welcome sessions and events for participants. She works in a collaborative fashion and provides a confidential and compassionate ear for volunteers and participants. Kerry is passionate about mental health and leads training for Dudley Mind to upskill local sports providers in mental health awareness. Kerry has recently gained employment in an addiction rehabilitation facility having increased her passion and confidence for working with vulnerable people.

Steve Bradley has been inspirational in supporting young adults with disabilities to access a range of sport, physical activity and well-being opportunities. This has culminated in him coaching two teams of young people with learning disabilities to win gold and silver in their para-Hockey category for England at the European Championships in Antwerp in August. His work has helped many aspiring sports players to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, and improve their overall physical activity levels as well as develop an understanding of why sport and physical activity is an important aspect of leading a lifestyle of choice.

Diane Sawyers has lived experience in mental health and is the voluntary manager at Holford Drive Community Sports Hub in Perry Barr, Birmingham. She helps young people with social or mental health issues, providing them with reassurance, support, often warm meals, training, volunteering and playing sport. Her support has helped them stay connected with their community and avoid entering the criminal justice system. She helps them to solve some of their main problems and issues, working with community members. She has set up the Hub as a safe haven for the local community and created sexual health workshops for marginalised young girls tackling prejudice, taboo, anxiety over relationships and fears over family rejection.

Shortlisted Nominees Outstanding Manager*

Individual

Kevin Priest works for Black Country Housing Group (BCHG) where he has been a shining example displaying concern for the wellbeing of his colleagues. Kevin has been instrumental in setting up initiatives with local primary schools to promote positive mental health, as well as signing the 'Time to Change' pledge, committing the organisation to change the way we think and act on mental health and laying on a variety of events and activities, including bhangra dancing, mindfulness classes, wellbeing talks and group walks.

Lyndi Wiltshire works tirelessly to promote parity of esteem within health care as the lead nurse for physical health within Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Trust. Lyndi has been instrumental in building a physical & complementary health team within mental health inpatient services. The current service provides; diabetes, tissue viability & continence, ECG and complementary therapy. It is due to the teams continued support of service users and staff that help reduce acute hospital admissions by recommending optimum treatment, advice and education to support the service user's recovery journey and experiences.

Elaine Yates has been the Chief Executive of Coventry Haven Women's Aid for the last five years. Her passion and drive for this sector has never wavered. From an employee level, her encouragement to her staff team is consistently nurturing and empowering.

Elaine has been hands on, achieving success at every role starting as a placement student and rising up the ranks to Chief Executive a quarter of a century later. She remains within the domestic abuse arena a formidable force and her professionalism and knowledge is recognised nationally.

“I honestly never expected to win the award, but I feel so proud to have done so. I think winning it really shows that you don’t have to have any qualifications or experience in mental health. Anyone can make a difference when they need to. It boils down to having the confidence to speak to someone and show them that you care. It has shown me that if I can do it, then anyone can.”



Caleb Turner

Thrive Mental Health Star Award Winner 2019

Caleb Turner answered a distress call on social media from a young man who was planning to take his own life. Caleb's quick but decisive actions prevented the suicide and ensured the man received support at the right time. Caleb received the coveted Thrive Mental Health Super Star Award in 2019.

Entertainment provided by:



Phil Taylor (Magician)

The 'honest cheat', Phil Taylor, is the Birmingham-based trickster who has been performing magic in and around the city for over 10 years. With over 15 years of working in the industry, Phil provides some of the best magic from around the world. Phil also runs the UK's largest magician podcast, addressing important topics including mental health in the entertainment industry, especially amongst magicians.



The Wellbeing Community Choir

The Wellbeing Choir takes an holistic approach to promoting and maintaining good mental and physical health through singing. It is a choir open to the whole community though aimed at supporting individuals, suffering with, or recovering from a mental illness or chronic medical disability - it's appeal is universal. Many members are vulnerable adults who experience difficulties in everyday life and who would otherwise be isolated and socially marginalised.

Members of the choir are mental health service users, carers, professionals and other members of the community from diverse backgrounds. With an inclusive philosophy the choir uses music to embrace and include people from all ages and all walks of life.



Barbara Nice

Barbara Nice, ordinary housewife extraordinaire, is a much loved comedy circuit headliner and has had critically acclaimed solo shows at The Edinburgh festival and regularly tours nationally venues include The Lowry, Birmingham Rep and The Hippodrome.

Barbara is the comedy creation of Janice Connolly BEM artistic director of award winning Women and Theatre with 34 years experience of making new work including a long term partnership with Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust.

The submissions and details of nomination entries have been submitted by members of the general public and published in good faith. The West Midlands Combined Authority is not responsible for any fabrications or inaccuracies contained within. The details are correct at time of publication (January 2020).