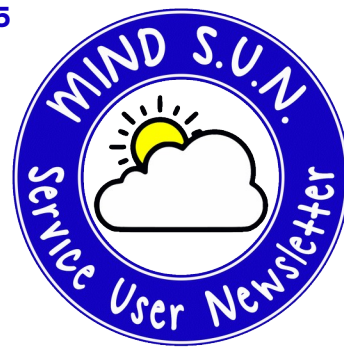


# mind in Hillingdon

Winter Edition | 2025



## Hillingdon Mind Group Activities

Hearing Voices  
Online Group

Online  
Social Group

Creative Art  
Online

Job Hub

Wellbeing Walk

Carers Support  
Online Group

Wednesday Art Group

Wednesday Evening  
Social Group

Women's Group

Online Creative Writing

Online Social and Quiz

Men's Group

Allotment/Gardening



Welcome to the last SUN - our Service Users Newsletter, of 2025. We can say with confidence that the SUN is truly up and running now and it's time for more of you- the service users of Hillingdon Mind- to contribute and help co-produce it.

And so we invite and welcome all contributions! Have you any pictures, poems, articles, ideas, experiences, tips, links, stories, hopes or questions that you would like to see here in the newsletter?

If so, send them to us at [newsletter@hillingdonmind.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@hillingdonmind.org.uk) and make the SUN your own!

This issue we have included positive mental health tips and information to help cope with the cold and the holidays. As ever we are showcasing artistic talent and updates about our new partnership with CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College.



## Coping with the holidays

For many cultures, we are moving into a holiday season: Christmas, Chanukah, Yule, and the coming of the New Year. Most holidays also revolve around family, friends, or a wider community coming together, and celebrations are often large and quite hectic. This can feel incredibly daunting for some who perhaps don't have people to spend the holidays with or have lost someone, especially someone close to them, this year. Many of us cannot afford travel or gifts and it can be dismaying to see how others spend their holidays, especially as depicted in advertising.

Even if we have people with whom to celebrate, for those of us already trying to cope with a mental condition, having to prepare, host or attend gatherings can be very stressful; and the noise and crowds outside can be quite overwhelming. Once we have got through the holiday period, we may feel pressure to make new year's resolutions, which we may fail to keep before the first week of January is out!

If you feel alone over the holidays, finding a community in your local area to celebrate with can be a good place to start. If you find you don't have one, ask the people around you or look around online for events nearby.

Presents, especially expensive ones, are a luxury rather than a necessity, but many of us still want to give them. For those who struggle financially, try to buy gifts second-hand at charity shops or using resell apps (e.g. eBay, Vinted). Many items on these websites are still new with tags and much cheaper than retail price.

Managing expectations is crucial, especially if you're the one organising or hosting. You may feel pressure to have perfect decorations and an excessive platter of food or feel inadequate compared to gatherings you see online. Focus on what feels best for you rather than what looks best to others.

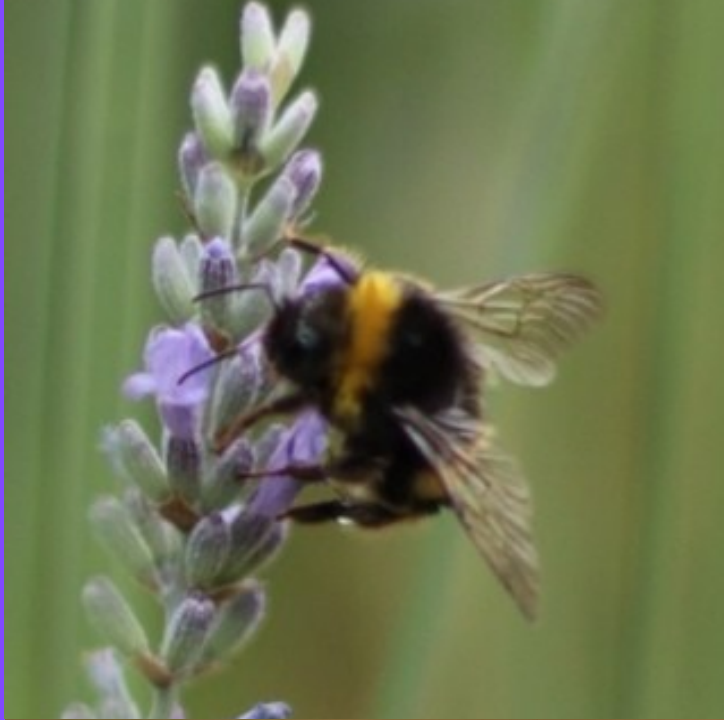
If you've experienced a loss this year, honour the feeling. Allow yourself to grieve and recognise any changes this will make to your usual holiday celebrations. It might make you feel better to light a candle or leave a set at the table to acknowledge their memory.

The holiday season may trigger past traumas. Common examples are alcohol consumption/overconsumption, loud sounds such as fireworks, and abuse within families or institutions. Allow yourself space to acknowledge your triggers; prepare strategies for de-escalation and removing yourself if they occur. However, if triggers would cause you harm, it is safest to avoid them.

However, you choose to celebrate is ultimately up to you. Prioritise what makes you and enjoy it.



# Creative Contributions





# Positive Mental Health

At Mind, we believe in the power of connection, especially when it comes to mental health. In a world that is increasingly digital, yet often feels isolating, staying connected can be one of the most important steps in maintaining well-being. This month, we're focusing on the simple but powerful ways we can all strengthen our bonds with others, create supportive environments, and nurture our mental health.

## Why Staying Connected Matters

Humans are social creatures. Connection is vital to our emotional and psychological well-being. Whether it's a conversation with a close friend, a family member, a colleague, or even a community group, feeling connected can provide us with the support we need to navigate life's challenges.

Research shows that people with strong social connections tend to have better mental health outcomes, lower levels of stress, and a greater sense of purpose. But in a time when social distancing and technology often replace face-to-face interactions, it's important to be intentional about how we maintain those connections.



## Simple Ways to Stay Connected

### 1. Regular Check-ins:

Life can get busy, but taking just a few minutes each week to check in with loved ones can go a long way. A simple "How are you?" can open the door to meaningful conversation and give someone the chance to share what they're going through.

### 2. Create a Routine for Socializing:

Even if we can't always meet in person, scheduling virtual hangouts or phone calls can help keep relationships strong. Plan a regular movie night, virtual coffee date, or game night with friends or family.

### 3. Engage in Supportive Communities:

Whether it's joining a group focused on mental health, a hobby, or a cause you care about, finding a community that understands and supports you can be incredibly healing. At [Charity Name], we offer regular virtual meetups, support groups, and workshops to help you connect with others who are navigating similar experiences.

### 4. Volunteer or Offer Help:

Helping others can be a powerful way to stay connected while making a positive impact. Volunteering can boost your sense of purpose, and it's a great way to meet others who are also giving back. If you're interested in volunteering with [Charity Name], check out our upcoming opportunities!

### 5. Be Kind to Yourself:

While staying connected is important, it's also essential to set boundaries and take care of your mental health. It's okay to take time for yourself when you need it. Self-care and social connections go hand in hand.

# Creative Contributions



## Bread and Mindfulness

I didn't know what an “occupational therapist” or an “OT” was until I was referred to a psychiatric unit.

I had been there two days and was sitting alone in the garden when a lady came and introduced herself, telling me she was the occupational therapist. She explained that there were various activities she and her colleagues ran, including art, smoothie-making, baking, or mindfulness, and invited me to any of them.

I didn't know what mindfulness was, so thought I'd give baking a go, and spent some time in the kitchen making scones and cupcakes.

Later on, I had a go at baking bread, which I found a really satisfying experience, and when I was discharged I continued to make my own bread at home.

I always make my own bread now. It is a very satisfying experience to make your own bread from scratch, and it makes a lovely smell in the oven.

It is also a great way of practising mindfulness, and focusing on the task in hand and on its physical sensations—sifting the flour, kneading the dough—helps to stay in the present, not thinking about the past or worrying about the future.

For a nice white loaf you'll need:

- 500 g of strong flour
- 1 teaspoon of runny honey
- 1 dessertspoon of vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon of fast action dried yeast
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 330 ml of lukewarm water



*Continued on next page*

# Creative Contributions



## Baking Instructions

Pre-heat your oven to 230 degrees.

I sift the flour into a large bowl through a very fine strainer, gently tapping the side of the strainer, watching the bright, fine cloud of flour as it softly falls into the bowl.

I sprinkle the yeast over the flour, then the salt, stirring it together.

I then add the honey and oil to the jug of water and stir, picking up the sweet smell of the honey and oil as it wafts up from the warm water.

I pour the water over the flour, stirring as I do so with a wooden spoon until it becomes a big ball of dough.

Each time my mind drifts to thinking about something else, I bring my thoughts back to stirring the dough. Finally, I take out the spoon, rub a little flour between my hands and knead the dough by hand. I do this in my hands, not on a surface, exercising my fingers and being mindful of the lovely colour of the dough, its smell, and its texture—pliable, stretchy, and eventually very smooth.

Sometimes I have some gentle music on, but as often as not I just stay aware of the sounds around me, the birdsong, people outside, and look out of the window, to the sky, the visible treetops, then bring my attention back to the smooth surface of the dough I am rolling in my hands. After about ten minutes of mindful kneading, I put the dough back into the bowl, cover it with a damp tea towel, and leave it to rise.

About an hour later, I have a look to see how it has risen, almost to the rim of the bowl. Now I gently knock the air out of the dough and knead it for a bit more. (This second kneading is called “proving”, as the yeast “proves” its magical self once again!)

Now I shape the dough, put it into a bread tin lined with non-stick paper, and cover with the damp cloth for another hour or so to let it rise again.

Making bread by hand cannot be rushed, but this is why it is such a lovely thing to do for good mental health. Making bread gives us time for ourselves and helps me deal with my particular pests, hurry and indecision.

At last it is time to put the loaf into the hot oven. I leave it for half an hour until it is golden and crusty, smelling amazing. When I take it out of the tin, I tap the base with a knuckle—there is a lovely hollow sound which means the bread is done.

I have to resist the temptation of cutting it straight away—it needs to be left to cool for a wee while before it is nice and ready to slice.

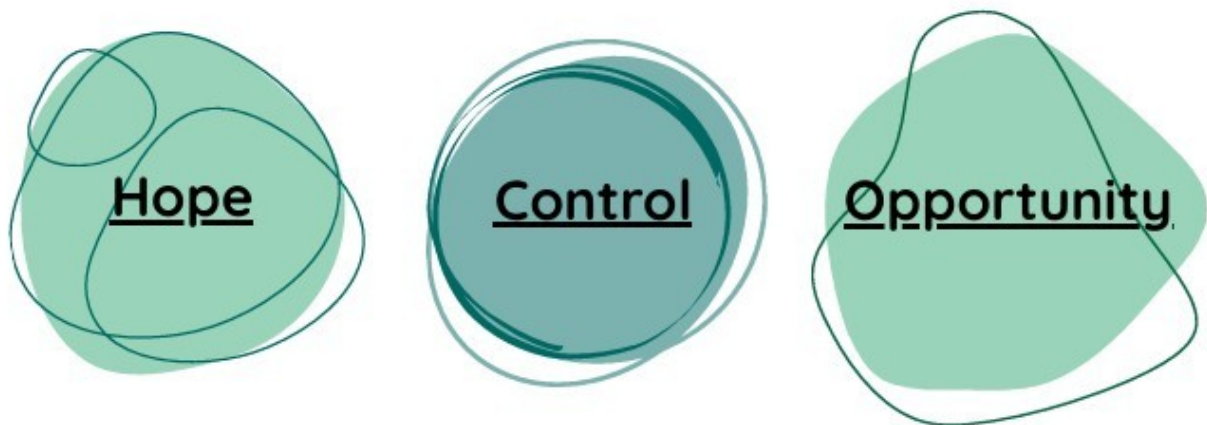
I am so grateful for the occupational therapy of making bread—it is a small, mindful miracle, one that is lovely to share.

Article by Patrick





# CNWL RECOVERY & WELLBEING COLLEGE



Hillingdon Mind's partnership with the CNWL Recovery and Wellbeing College is going from strength to strength, with recovery College workshops now regularly hosted by us at St Andrew's.

We are looking forward to co-hosting additional workshops at the Southlands Arts centre in West Drayton.

We are very proud to announce that service users Kelli and Vishal, now fully accredited Peer Trainers, will be facilitating workshops in the new year!

The Recovery College offer a range of amazing and empowering workshops and courses; have a look and see what appeals to you:

**CNWL Recovery & Wellbeing College :: Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust**





# Creative Contributions



Pictures by James, Tina & Vishal





# Resources

## Keeping Homes Warm this Winter

HEAT provides 1-to-1 mentoring, support, and advocacy for households experiencing energy-related challenges. Their Energy Mentors offer holistic, independent, and tailored advice to help people navigate energy crises and take control of their energy use.

They offer ongoing support throughout the entire journey, ensuring households understand their options and feel empowered to make informed decisions.

### Support includes:

- Tackling energy emergencies
- Addressing fuel debt and related issues
- Advocating on behalf of households with energy suppliers and agencies
- Accessing energy grants and crisis funds
- Optimising energy usage and improving household energy efficiency

In addition to advice and advocacy service, they also have limited direct funding available for households experiencing significant hardship.

They welcome self-referrals from individuals or families that may benefit from this support. Households can also self-refer using the link below, after which one of their Energy Mentors will be in touch: **HEAT**



# Hillingdon's Warm Welcome Centres

Hillingdon's libraries and some faith and community buildings are offering residents a warm and friendly place to enjoy some company and a free hot drink, and get help and advice on how to stay warm and healthy during the colder winter days.

## Mondays

### **Activities and Refreshments for Vulnerable Adults and Elderly People**

St Margaret's, Uxbridge,  
11am to 1pm

### **Crane Winter Welcome**

Crane Youth and Community  
Centre, from 11 November,  
1.30pm to 3.30pm

### **Board Game Social**

West Drayton Library, 3pm to 4.30pm

### **Board Game Social**

Oak Farm Library, 5pm to 6.30pm

### **Chess Group**

Yeading Library, 5pm to 6.45pm

### **Short Reads Reading Group**

Yeading Library,  
second Monday of the month,  
6pm to 6.45pm

## Tuesdays

### **Activities, Games, Chat and Refreshments**

Charville Community Centre,  
from 18 November,  
9am to midday

### **Focused on Football**

Northwood Library  
(Kate Fassnidge Community Hall),  
11am to midday

### **Activities and Refreshments for Vulnerable Adults and Elderly People**

St Margaret's, Uxbridge,  
11am to 1pm

### **Pensioners Group**

Barnhill Community Centre,  
1pm to 3pm

### **Crossword**

Manor Farm Library, 2pm to 4pm

### **Knit and Natter**

Harefield Library, 2pm to 4pm



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

[discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/  
warm-welcome-centre-activities](https://discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centre-activities)

## Wednesdays

### Coffee Morning

Hayes Muslim Centre,  
10am to midday

**Coffee Morning with Guest Speaker**  
Yeading Library, second Wednesday  
of each month, 11am to midday

- 10 December with Yeading Infants School Choir.
- 14 January with Paul Davison from Hillingdon Archives, talking about local history.
- 11 February with P3 Charity, talking about challenges faced by young people in our community.

### Activities and Refreshments for Vulnerable Adults and Elderly People

St Margaret's, Uxbridge,  
11am to 1pm

**Coffee Morning with  
The Confederation Hillingdon**  
Ruislip Manor Library,  
10 December, 14 January and  
11 February, 11am to 1pm

**Welcome Wednesday**  
Hayes End Methodist Church,  
11.15am to 1.45pm

## Thursdays

### Activities, Games, Chat and Refreshments

Charville Community Centre,  
from 20 November, 9am to midday

**Adult Board Games**  
Yeading Library, 10.30am to midday

**Coffee Morning and Activities**  
Uxbridge Centre, 10.30am to 2pm

**Community Coffee Morning**  
Northwood Library  
(Kate Fassnidge Community Hall),

first Thursday of each month,  
11am to midday

### Activities and Refreshments for Vulnerable Adults and Elderly People

St Margaret's, Uxbridge,  
11am to 1pm

**Get Creative**  
Ruislip Manor Library,  
2pm to 3.45pm

## Fridays

**Get Moving – Exercises for Over-50s**  
Uxbridge Centre, 10.30am to 11.30am

**Oak Farm Coffee Morning**  
Oak Farm Library, alternate Fridays  
from 14 November to  
20 March, 10.30am to midday


**Memory Café**  
St Paul's Ruislip, 11am to 12.45pm.  
Followed by an exercise class,  
1pm to 1.45pm.

**Board Game Social**  
Oak Farm Library, 1pm to 2.30pm

**Read Aloud**  
West Drayton Library, 2pm to 3pm

**Knit and Natter**  
West Drayton Library, 2pm to 3.15pm

**Craft Group**  
Manor Farm Library, 2pm to 4pm

**For more information and to find additional activities, visit**  
 [discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centre-activities](https://discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/warm-welcome-centre-activities)  
Sessions run from December 2025 to March 2026 unless otherwise stated



# Creative Contributions



# Current Group Activity Details

## **Hearing Voices Online Group - Monday 10.15 am – 11.15 am**

Hearing Voices Groups are people with shared experiences coming together to support one another. They offer a safe haven where people who hear, see or sense things that other people don't can feel accepted, valued and understood.

## **Online Social Group - Monday 5.30 pm – 7 pm**

We run online and face to face groups to help you meet new people and enjoy a range of social activities. The group offers light refreshments and the opportunity to talk with others. The group provides various activities to get involved in or you can just sit and spend time with others, there are no expectations.

## **Creative Art Online - Tuesday 2.30 pm – 4 pm**

Our weekly Creative Art group aims to improve mental health and reduce social isolation through creativity and conversation. You don't need to have any skills or experience in art to join the group. People of all abilities are welcome.

## **Job Hub - Wednesday 11 am – 1 pm**

Employment Support is a service designed to assist anyone with mental health problems to find work and live independently in the community. Through the service people can access support in many areas to help increase your independence and work related skills.

## **Wellbeing Walk - Wednesday 2 pm – 3 pm**

The Walking Group meets weekly, it's a mixed group of all ages, and walks take around an hour to an hour and half, taking place in local parks. Both walking and being in nature hold many benefits for your mental health. So, combining the two is a fantastic way to support your wellbeing.

## **Carers Support Online Group - Wed pm**

This support is offered by the Mental Health Recovery team at Hillingdon Mind; they offer practical and emotional support and can assist you in supporting both you and the person you are caring for. Our weekly peer support group is known as Coffee and Chat on-line.

## **Wednesday Art Group - Wednesday 5.15 pm – 6.15 pm**

Our weekly Creative Art group aims to improve mental health and reduce social isolation through creativity and conversation. You don't need to have any skills or experience in art to join the group. People of all abilities are welcome.

# Current Group Activity Details

## **Wednesday Evening Social Group - Wednesday 5 pm – 7 pm**

We run online and face to face groups to help you meet new people and enjoy a range of social activities. The group offers light refreshments and the opportunity to talk with others. The group provides various activities to get involved in or you can just sit and spend time with others, there are no expectations.

## **Women's Group - Thursday 2 pm – 4 pm**

Our weekly support group is for women experiencing mental health issues, feelings of isolation, loneliness, lack of confidence or low self-esteem. The session offers a safe, informal and non-judgemental space to have a chat, share experiences and learn new coping strategies.

## **Online Creative Writing - Friday 10.30 am – 12 pm**

Creative Writing can be a form of self-expression and therapy that can offer many benefits for your mental health. Our weekly Creative Writing group provides a relaxed, informal get-together for people experiencing mental health issues who are interested in writing and want to improve their wellbeing. The group is suitable for people of all abilities. You don't need to have any writing skills or experience.

## **Online Social and Quiz - Friday 5.30 pm – 7.30 pm**

Our weekly social groups run online as well as face to face.

## **Men's Group - Saturday 12 pm - 1 pm**

Our weekly support group is for men experiencing mental health issues, feelings of isolation, loneliness, lack of confidence or low self-esteem. The session offers a safe, informal and non-judgemental space to have a chat, share experiences and learn new coping strategies. Activities and Workshops will be offered and the sessions will be supported by peer support volunteers and staff.

## **Allotment/Gardening - Saturday 1.00 pm – 2.15 pm**

The Gardening group meets weekly and is a chance to get together to grow and nurture plants, develop your gardening skills, get some exercise and socialise. No gardening knowledge is necessary just a willingness to get involved and help where you can.

**If you would like to know more about any of these please contact a member of Hillingdon Mind staff on 01895 271559.**



# Resources

**Hillingdon Cove Café operate a drop-in/no appointment crisis service  
between 2pm to 10pm 365 days a year.**

Contact them on: 07827 535271 or visit:

Apple Blossom Cottage, Rear of Apple Blossom Lodge,  
64 Ickenham Road, Ruislip, HA4 7DQ.

**in a crisis and wish to speak to someone, contact:**

Single Point of Access (SPA)

Urgent Advice Line: 0800 0234 650

Hillingdon Samaritans: 116123

Your GP/ and or 999

**Contact us at Hillingdon Mind**

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

In person (by appointment only)

40 New Windsor St, Uxbridge, UB8 2TU

Phone: 01895 271559

Please keep your contributions flowing in for our new regular newsletters by email to:  
**[newsletter@hillingdonmind.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@hillingdonmind.org.uk)**

“As always, a big thank you to all the service users and volunteers who have worked on putting this newsletter together” – Hillingdon Mind